

Disability NOW!

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for everyone
with an interest
in disability

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New law - new losers

Disabled people could lose their right to sue for medical negligence, under new legal aid rules to be introduced next April.

Lawyers and disability groups have condemned new, American-style plans to abolish legal aid for civil cases and replace it with a no-win, no-fee system.

The plans, outlined by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, will affect parents of brain damaged children wanting to sue for damages and those suing authorities for failing to give them a proper education.

He said: "Those on low incomes as well as those on middle or higher incomes will be on an equal footing. The decision whether or not to go ahead with any particular case will depend on its strength, not on the financial resources of the client."

But solicitor David Ruebain, a specialist in disability cases, said those taking court action might need to take out insurance if they lost the case, to pay an opponent's fees.

In complex cases of medical or educational negligence, insurance premiums could be as much as £10,000. Solicitors would not pay this up front and it would be left to the client.

He added: "It is almost impossible for a lawyer to take a view at the outset. The solicitor won't just do it because the client can pay a premium as the solicitor still won't get paid if they lose."

Only a very small number of parents would be able to afford

medical examinations to persuade a solicitor to take on a case, he said.

Brian Lamb, head of public affairs at Scope, said: "There will be very few medical negligence cases going through the courts which means that those children's rights are going to be taken away.

"Without the possibility of going to law, parents are not going to be able to hold health authorities to account and neither is the public in general."

However, Lord Irvine is still consulting over whether insurance premiums and investigation costs, such as medical examinations, should be met by the client, the solicitor, or through loans from the legal aid budget.

Nikki Archer and her husband Ian are suing Maidstone Hospital after their daughter Monique was brain-damaged there at birth three years ago.

Mrs Archer said: "We have both been unemployed for some time so there is no way

we could have paid for this.

"We would not have been able to come up with £10,000 insurance."

In cases of judicial review, where a client asks the court

to review an authority's decision, legal aid will still be available, but only if the Legal Aid Board is convinced that there is a 75 per cent chance of success.



Animal magic: Young Sean Ratcliffe, who is deaf, gets up close to a ruffled lemur at London Zoo during National Deaf Awareness Week in October. Sean is pictured with signer Maureen Bergson (left) and zoo worker Andy Hallsworth.

MICHAEL MELIA

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BIBIC attack

BIBIC (The British Institute for Brain Damaged Children) has been given a damning report by the Child Development and Disability Group, part of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

The Somerset-based institute which intensively treats disabled children, especially those with cerebral conditions, was criticised for claiming dramatic improvements, which the report said were usually untrue.

It added that parents were sometimes given false hope and it criticised the overly intensive programmes, language and communication therapy, feeding advice and training.

It also said BIBIC's practice of hanging children upside down had no therapeutic benefit.

BIBIC medical director, Dr Stephen Wood, said many recommendations for change had already been made. "Over-dramatic claims for improvement are invariably from parents."

He added: "Any part of a programme which proves distressing to a child is always removed from the programme."

Cash raised from council house sales should be used to make houses accessible to disabled people, says cerebral palsy charity Scope.

Building regulations should also be changed to ensure that all new housing and refurbishments meet accessibility standards.

The call comes in a new report *Scope For Fair Housing**, which also highlights the need for housing among black disabled

people, noting a lack of research into the area.

Research and public policy manager, Jill Stewart, said: "Legislation is complex and confusing and stops joint working between agencies such as housing, social services, health and voluntary organisations.

"The complexity of funding mechanisms are a nightmare, and there is a lack of knowledge among local authorities of

what housing needs are and what housing they have got.

"If the current situation is not addressed, many disabled people will be forced to remain in residential care or living with their families, denied the right to independence."

The report is the first part of an ongoing study with which Scope hopes to influence Government and housing providers.

* £5, tel: 0171-636 5020



Helping hand: Occupational therapists Christine Erne (left) and Catherine Bok (right) help Janet Jameson try out equipment during the Disabled Living Foundation's disability awareness week. MICHAEL MELIA

Still hungry

A Leeds man who started a hunger strike on 7 October to protest against the unfairness of the Benefits Agency Medical Service all-work test, is still starving himself.

Keith Rushworth, 47, who has ME, wants to change the way disabled people are tested for Incapacity Benefit and is prepared to die to highlight the injustices of the system.

He said: "I have written to Harriet Harman twice but have had no response."

Keith is writing to all Labour MPs in the hope of instigating a change in the benefits system.

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Stop press

Holiday winner

A guest house in Pennington, Hampshire, has won silver in the English Tourist Board awards.

The Our Bench Guest House got the Tourism for All award for welcoming guests with disabilities.

Scope on the move

Scope will be moving its London headquarters from Park Crescent and Fitzroy Square to Market Road, London N7 on 8 December.

A £300,000 grant from the Bridge House Estates trust will be used to make the new, open-plan offices even more accessible.

Over the moon

Chris Moon, who lost a leg and an arm in a landmine explosion and campaigned against them, including racing 137 miles across the Sahara desert to raise money for the Red Cross, is one of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation's People of the Year 1997.

DN's complementary therapy booklet is also available on audio tape. For your free copy, write to DN, address on page 2.

Pressure on Sugar

The pressure is still on to get the BBC to reverse its decision to scrap the disability programme, *Does He Take Sugar?*

MEP for Coventry and North Warwickshire, Christine Oddy, launched a petition following the announcement in July and now more than 1,500 people have signed up. The petition will be presented to the House of Commons this month.

The programme was put under the spotlight during a live radio debate on *Does He take Sugar?* at the Scope Conference in Blackpool last month.

Under Secretary of State for Employment and Equal Opportunities, Alan Howarth, said: "I think it would be quite outrageous if the BBC were to abandon specialist programme's such as *Does He Take Sugar?*"

Scope's chief executive, Richard Brewster, met controller James Boyle in October. Mr Brewster said: "There's a misunderstanding about the relationship between radio and disabled people."



Ad fury

A Voluntary Euthanasia Society advertisement telling people to imagine themselves paralysed in a wheelchair as a wasp moves across their face has sparked anger among pro-life groups.

The poster features Annie Lindsell who has Motor Neurone Disease, who won High Court backing in October to allow her GP, Simon Holmes, to administer high doses of drugs to ease her mental and physical distress.

Rachel Hurst, of Disability Awareness in Action, is sceptical of the poster. She said: "It has been put there to frighten people, but it is a situation that is not likely to happen if you are at that level of impairment because you are not likely to be alone in a room in which case somebody would do something about it. I have seen people with Motor Neurone disease who don't die in that way or who are not left."

Drug gets OK

At least 228 MPs and members of the House of Lords in the All Party Disablement Group have backed DN's survey which found 97 per cent of readers who responded thought cannabis should be legalised for medical purposes.

Lord Ashley, co-chair of the All Party Disablement Group, raised the issue at its meeting last month.

Twenty-five MPs have also signed Paul Flynn's early day motion on the decriminalisation of cannabis for medicinal use. The motion was put forward after DN's cannabis survey.

The British Medical Association is calling for the Misuse of Drugs Act to be amended so that prescribing certain extracts of the

cannabis plant will no longer be illegal.

Its new report, *Therapeutic uses of cannabis*, urges a central registry of patients using the extracts and more tests on the "remarkably safe drugs" which it says have fewer side effects than some stronger, legal drugs.

Brian Iddon MP has met Home Office Minister, George Howarth, who is responsible for drugs. Mr Iddon told DN: "The Government say that if cannabis were to be made available as a medicine, it would have to be screened to make sure it was safe. This could take years. I am going to get a definitive view from them."

Austin Mitchell MP is leading

a delegation of people with MS who will discuss the medicinal use of cannabis with junior Health Minister, Paul Boateng, later this month.

Service users at London Lighthouse, the charity for people with HIV and Aids, are also backing the cause and have joined forces with the Alliance of Cannabis Therapeutics to campaign for legalisation for therapeutic use.

Paul Theobald has HIV and uses cannabis. He told DN: "It helps with my appetite, stress, to sleep and to control nausea." • DN is continuing its cannabis survey. Non-disabled people and non-cannabis users are also invited to comment, (see our address on page 2).



Work in store: Secretary of State for Social Security, Harriet Harman, gets her shopping from Michael Roberts, (left) who has a learning disability, and Androulla Pateyi, (right) who has a hearing impairment, watched by Alan Howarth, Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, at the Tesco Metro store in Covent Garden. Ms Harman was at the store to emphasise her commitment to involve disabled people in the Welfare to Work scheme. She said disabled people had felt excluded from society and written off to a lifetime on benefits, for too long.

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Talking about working it out

More than 100 representatives from disability and employment organisations have met to suggest ways of spending the £195 million set aside for the Welfare to Work programme.

The programme aims to get long-term sick and disabled people back to work or help them to stay employed.

At a seminar in London last

month, organised by the Departments of Social Security and Education, Under Secretary of State for Employment and Equal Opportunities, Alan Howarth, said: "It is economically mad that disabled people don't have the opportunity to work if they want."

Department bosses outlined the programme's structure

which will include work schemes, personal advisers and support through mentoring.

Richard Wood, chief executive of the British Council of Disabled People, said: "This is analogous to what has happened in community care, when care managers and case managers intervene in the lives of disabled people and become

experts. I am concerned this will happen again."

There were some concerns over people losing benefits when going into schemes. Under Secretary of State for the Department of Social Security, Baroness Hollis, said: "This is something we are going to have to look at because it would be foolish to have the whole scheme

subverted by that."

• The Disablement Income Group is calling for a new system to replace the All Work Test. It would include rehabilitation and benefits flexibility as well as employability assessments carried out by experts on ability rather than doctors – and would lead to individual action plans.

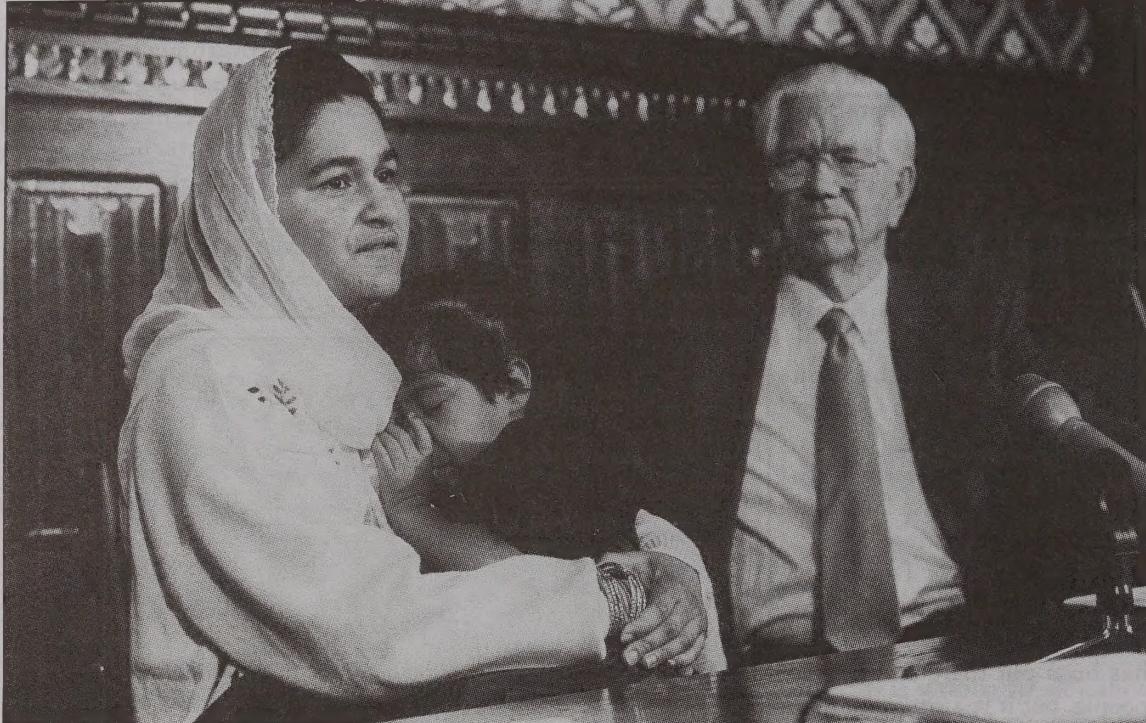
Help on way

People with learning difficulties who are a victim of, or a witness to, a crime could get more support from the Government.

In a written answer to Liberal Democrat spokesman on disability, Paul Burstow, Paul Boateng, Junior Health Minister, said the Home Office's inter-departmental group on vulnerable and intimidated witnesses was looking into measures that could be taken. Its review would include considering the need to issue guidance to the police in handling these cases.

Open door

A group of 11 MPs are supporting a private member's bill calling on the Government to review restrictions on the use of National Lottery proceeds, so that buildings can be made more accessible to disabled people.



Listen up: Four-year-old Ayesha Muhir with her mother Naureen and Lord Ashley highlight the lack of health authority funding for cochlear implant operations.

Ayesha, from Yorkshire, is waiting for implants and her doctors are worried that the delay will cause the nerves responsible for hearing to waste away if they are not stimulated soon.

In Lord Ashley's survey, 1994-96, only 28 out of 100 health authorities in England and Wales responded. The number of cochlea implant operations for both adults and children which they funded, varied from none to one.

Lord Ashley, who has an implant, is calling on the Government to provide central funding for the operations. They cost £25-£28,000.

ANTONIO OLMO

OAPs to go home

Health Secretary Frank Dobson has promised to spend the extra £269 million promised for the National Health Service on services for elderly people.

He plans to avert a winter crisis in the NHS by making home care more widely available and keeping elderly patients out of hospital. His announcement comes as an Audit Commission report *Coming of Age** says that with proper preparation, more elderly patients could be sent home from hospital instead of to nursing or residential homes. Each year almost one in five over-75s is admitted to hospital.

*£20, tel: (01235) 400400

No go on wind-chill

The Government has decided against altering cold weather payments to take account of the wind-chill factor.

This is despite the fact that a Commons motion calling for "an amendment of the cold weather payments system so that the wind-chill can be taken into account" was signed last November by 176 MPs, most of them Labour.

Cold weather payments are only triggered when temperatures fall below zero for a week. The wind, which can drastically increase the chill factor, making people more vulnerable to hypothermia, is not included in the equation.

War guilt

Armed Forces Minister, John Reid, admitted that a cocktail of drugs was given to British troops in the Gulf War, despite an official warning.

His disclosures in October were broadly welcomed by veterans affected by Gulf War syndrome.

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At whose service?

Local authorities should adopt a consistent approach to assessing disabled people's available income when deciding whether to charge for services.

In a new report *Disability-related costs and charges for community care**, the Disablement Income Group (DIG) suggests a framework which local authorities could use, taking into account extra costs for travel, equipment, personal assistance, laundry, holidays, food and fuel.

DIG fears many local authorities regard disability benefits

such as Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) as available income and make charges accordingly.

But it says these benefits are often used to meet additional disability-related costs and may not even cover these. Government guidelines say local authorities should not undermine DLA through charges.

The report says authorities should take extra costs into account and charge according to individual circumstances, making allowances in order to

disregard some income.

Pauline Thompson, director of DIG, said: "We have looked at what a person actually needs to spend because of their disability. It amazes me that people find the money for what they need in the first place. Then the local authority helps itself to DLA. If local authorities find they cannot obtain as much money in charging, so be it."

Coventry social services has introduced a pilot scheme based on DIG's suggestions.

* £9.50 tel: 0171-263 3981



Face value: Heather Mills, 29, who lost part of her leg in a motorbike accident, has signed a £750,000 contract with Italian cosmetics company, Pascal. The posters will be seen across Europe. Heather was a judge in the Sunrise Medical DN modelling competition in 1995.



Dad gets campaign on road

The father of a young disabled girl has launched a campaign to allow children under five to get cars from Motability.

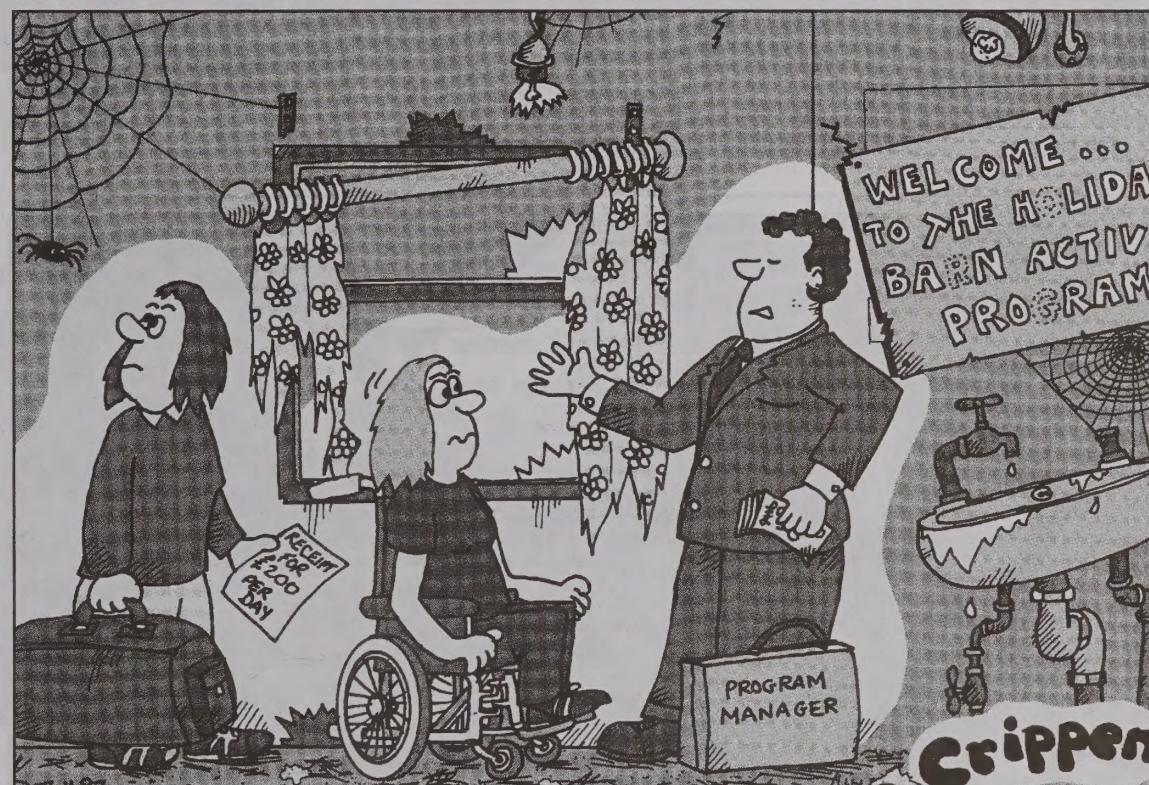
Disabled people can pay for their cars from the charity using the higher rate mobility

component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). But children under five are not entitled to this benefit.

Paul Preston, (above right) from Lancashire, has a three-year-old daughter, Stacey, who has a neuro-muscular condition and a low life expectancy. He already has a car but is worried about what would happen if it let him down.

"Are we saying that a child should be kept in until the age of five? If so, that is discrimination. Families could be spared the financial stress and anxiety of having to think where the next penny is coming from to keep a car on the road."

A spokesperson for the Department of Social Security said all disability benefits were being reviewed. But she added: "A lot of children do not naturally walk before age five."



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Councils hand over cash

At least 80 per cent of local authorities will have set up schemes allowing disabled people to use council money to pay for their care within a year, a survey revealed in October.

Initial findings from the Policy Studies Institute show nearly 50 per cent of authorities operating some kind of payment scheme for care. Two-thirds of the authorities which

do not run schemes intend to introduce direct payments in line with the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act, effective since April.

Frances Hasler, of the National Centre for Independent Living, who helped carry out the survey, said: "It's a very optimistic picture tempered by the fact that it is not even across the country. If

you live in the North or in Wales you have a much smaller chance of having a scheme within the next 12 months."

Meanwhile, Carers National Association and the Association of Directors of Social Services are calling on the Government to provide money to fund the Carers Act after carrying out a new survey *In on the Act - Social*

*Services experiences of the Carers Act**.

Of those authorities responding, one in six were considering cuts to carers' services.

- Sefton Council on Merseyside has reversed its policy of not helping care home residents until their savings fall below £1,500.

*£10, tel: 0171-490 8818

In brief

Computer pairing

The disability information consultancy, the Computability Centre, has merged with the Foundation of Communication for the Disabled, a national supplier of computers to disabled people.

The new organisation, AbilityNet, which starts up on 1 January, will offer a free telephone inquiry line, individual assessments, training courses and support services.

Tel: (01926) 312847

Son rises over here

The Son-Rise Program, Start Up, for children with special needs, is holding a week-long training programme from 12-16 January, in London.

The programme was featured in the BBC documentary *I want my little boy back* in September and teaches communication techniques.

Tel: 001-413 229 2100

Better ballet view

The new Sadler's Wells Theatre in Islington, London, aims to be a pioneer of accessible and creative design when it re-opens next autumn.

The Theatre Foundation consulted with disabled people in the design process, and the revamp will be helped along by a £30 million National Lottery grant.

Help at a stroke

People who have had strokes are dying or becoming severely disabled because they do not have access to proper care, the Stroke Association claims.

Research by the *British Medical Journal* claims that for every 22 people who have had strokes, one extra person is likely to survive if treated in a stroke unit. The charity has put forward an early day motion signed by 42 MPs, urging the Government to set up more stroke units.

Celebration time

Scope's Meldreth Manor school in Hertfordshire had its 30th anniversary in November and to celebrate the school, along with past pupils and friends, held an anniversary fair.

Corrections

From DN's November issue:

The communications book *Michelle Finds A Voice* can be obtained by calling, tel: 0171-235 2351 ext. 146.

The picture captioned Angela Browning at the Tory party conference should read Theresa May.

Inclusive concerns

Charities have criticised proposals for greater inclusive education which were set out in the Government's consultative green paper *Excellence for all children - meeting special educational needs*, launched in October.

Many disability organisations are concerned about funding and reductions in statementing.

The Royal Association of Disability and Rehabilitation's education officer, Steve Davies, said: "Reducing the number of statements will simply make it harder for many disabled children to gain access to the mainstream schools."

Scope's director of education, Christine Gilder, said: "We are worried that there is no mention of replacing the legally binding statement with an equally strong legal right such as bringing education under the remit of the Disability Discrimination Act."

But Micheline Mason, coordinator of the Alliance for Inclusive Education, said many organisations were over-reacting: "This is more to do with reallocation of money, not more funds."

A two-month consultation is now being carried out.

Doubts over new commission

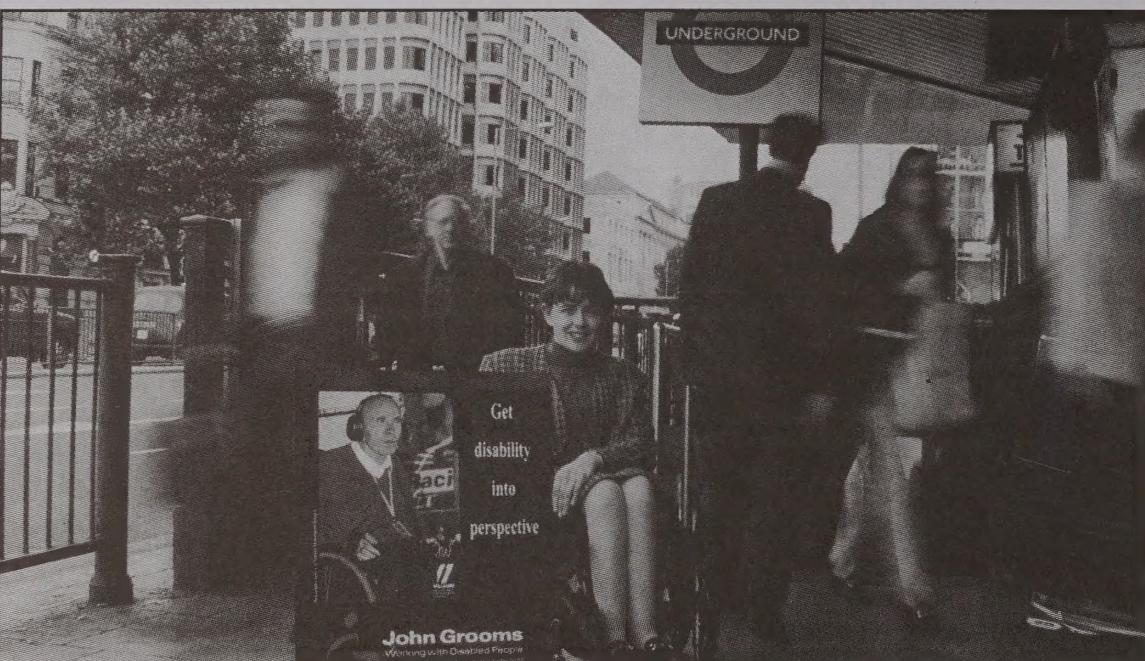
The Disability Rights Commission proposed by the Government may only rarely use its enforcement powers.

Speaking at the national conference of the Employers' Forum on Disability, equal opportunities minister, Alan

Howarth, said: "The commission will give authoritative advice in the field. It will have a role to conciliate and a power to investigate and enforce where that proves necessary, although I hope and expect that it would only very occa-

sionally prove necessary to use that particular power."

But Neil Betteridge, of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, feared the Commission would be denied cash to carry out its enforcement role.



In your face: Paralympian Tanni Grey shows off the poster of motor racing boss Frank Williams at the launch of the John Grooms' Perspectives awareness raising campaign. The poster challenges people on the London Underground to "Get disability into perspective."

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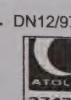


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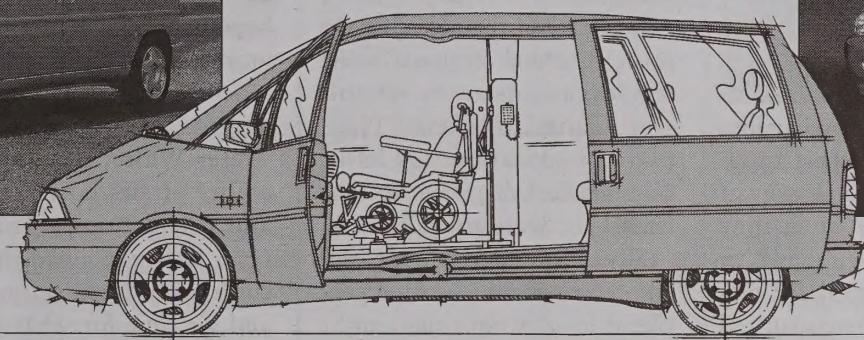


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Conference puts sharing on agenda

Scope held its first national conference in Blackpool – the *DN* team were there

Author William Horwood, whose daughter has cerebral palsy, set the tone for Scope's one-day conference by calling on disabled people to start changing the attitudes of the "disability unaware".

Mr Horwood (right) said: "We are here to try and improve the world for the future disabled people."

"Each of us has to do our part to rid the world of discrimination."

Seven seminars and numerous workshops took up the challenge by discussing topical subjects, including democracy and inclusive education.

Lorna Reith, director of the Disability Alliance, spoke of widespread inequities in community care. She said: "Local authorities should monitor the impact of charges on the local



population." Disabled solicitor, David Ruebain, said people could complain to the monitoring officer at the authority if they thought it was acting unlawfully, or to the Secretary of State, though he had not intervened in a case for 15 years.

At a seminar on health services, Dave Thompson, a wheelchair user, and disability services advisor at Warrington Community Health Care (NHS) Trust, spoke about good practice in his area. He is helping to produce a national guide on good practice for the NHS.

He said: "In our trust during the last two years, over 500 doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and OTs have attended equality and disability awareness training. They always ask why it was not available when they were training for their jobs."

He said it was vital for disabled people to be consulted



Tower of strength: Council member, Angela Drane, at Blackpool

over services and to be consulted in accessible venues.

At the seminar on education, Micheline Mason, coordinator of the Alliance for Inclusive Education, welcomed the recent Government green paper which works towards inclusion.

She attacked the idea that the more disabled students were, the less mainstream schools were suited to them. Their place in education was based on a medical diagnosis and she challenged Scope to oppose this.

Direct payments offer real empowerment to disabled people, if local authorities can be persuaded to play ball, the

Association of Directors of Social Services president, Roy Taylor, and co-director of the Centre for Independent Living, Frances Hasler, told the biggest audience. Both are spreading the message. They said the first direct payments survey looked hopeful: although over half (97) local authorities do not use the scheme, 67 of them are planning to (see page 6).

Peter White, the BBC's disability affairs correspondent, and David Brindle from *The Guardian*, explained the difficulties they faced getting space and air time for what is often seen as a marginal issue. David



Sweet sounds: Minister Alan Howarth (centre) with guests and presenters who took part in a live recording of the Radio Four programme *Does He Take Sugar?* in Blackpool

PICTURES BY GILLIAN SHAW

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Brindle blamed the widespread trivialising of news. Peter White called on disabled people to face interviews, so that the diversity of their views could be heard. "You have to get your hands dirty," he said.

At a workshop on using the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to get a job, Scope employment officer, Peter Ray, talked about a Scope survey which showed that 70 per cent of companies knew about the DDA, but only 43 per cent employed at least one disabled person. "The DDA cannot help you get a job. I think it will just make it more costly [for employers] to get rid of someone," he said.

"Trade unions have to make their members aware of disability and it should become a negotiable item like terms, conditions and wages."

The final plenary session discussed why transport and education had been excluded from the DDA.

Conservative MP Tim Collins (John Major's ex-speech writer), admitted the Tories would have to think again on this, but argued that the DDA should not be written off.

The Liberal Democrat spokesman on disability, Paul Burstow, vowed: "We want to disappoint the architects by ensuring it [the DDA] achieves far more than they ever expected."

125 of the 580 people who attended the conference came from outside Scope. Disabled people were generally positive. William Lever, from Oldham, said: "I found the direct payments session very interesting. I would like to take advantage of them if I could."

John Cherry, from the Isle of Man, was worried about the cost of being a member of Scope and attending the conference and AGM. "They need to think about people on benefit. You will have a vote, but not a say on the floor."

Anne Pridmore, vice-chair of the British Council of Disabled People, was disappointed. "I would like to see any conferences Scope do in the future being led by disabled people."

First timers

There were 50 exhibitors and over 80 product and information stands at the first All Round Ability exhibition at the Norbreck Castle Hotel.

Vine Seating and Support launched the Calergo Jaquette, (above) for people who need upper body support. Shaped



Up front and very loud

Under its new chairman, Scope is set to look outwards and to campaign with greater confidence alongside and on behalf of disabled people.

As Jim Hoskisson, 54, told the AGM: "We are a large organisation. We have a lot of weight, a lot of clout. There is probably no other organisation so uniquely placed as ourselves to be that voice. We should be up front and very loud."

He himself is a calm, articulate man. "There's nothing special about me – I haven't got any magic formulas. But people have confidence in me and that comes from being me, just a person who has experienced life without barricades."

He is determined that his daughter Ellen and other disabled people should have those opportunities too.

As a manager with Manx Telecom, he values communication. He will run Scope in partnership – with council, management and local groups.

He is no 5am memo man like Anthony Hewson. "There will be a shift to more civilised hours for people." And, again unlike his predecessor, he will spread the load and not take so much on himself. Taking early retirement at the end of the year will give him more time.

While he approves of all the restructuring, he appreciates the dangers. "Structure needs to be there to give us stability, but it needs to be flexible, so we continue to use creativity well. I am very confident that we can do that."



Tom Crocker tries Carmobility's new model

like a waistcoat, the Jaquette moulds into the desired shape and becomes rigid. About £300. Tel: (01525) 840887

Carmobility launched a wheelchair (either manual or electric), which allows the customer to climb into their car. It will benefit people who find it difficult to transfer from a wheelchair to a swivel chair. £7,000, tel: (01395) 568830.

Chairman Hewson bows out



Jim Hoskisson (right) with Anthony Hewson, now a life member

Scope has achieved an operating surplus of £1.3 million in 1996-7, the first time for 14 years.

"I have waited a long time for this day," said Jan Hildreth in his last speech as honorary treasurer at the charity's 45th annual general meeting. The surplus, £1.5 million better than budget, followed a deficit of £750,000 in the previous year.

Expenses for restructuring and losses on the sale of Newton Products, which reduced the surplus to a deficit of £504,000, were "one-off", he assured delegates.

Scope is on target for another surplus this year.

Chief executive Richard Brewster said no other organisation had the range of services or influence, and it was now time to build Scope's reputation

and complete the restructuring. He added: "We need a final dose of self belief."

"We also need to put our organisation at the service of other groups of disabled people."

His message came as the first 12 groups joined the individual group membership scheme and 123 people took up individual membership.

The AGM heard that £35,000

Elections

Leslie Unwin, is Scope's new honorary treasurer – one of five executive council members to be re-elected. The others are: Denise Bloomfield, David Hayes, Jan Hildreth and Jim Hoskisson. Carl Williamson is the only new member. A vice-chair is yet to be elected.

had been spent on organising the scheme, and that it was hoped 3,500 people would take up the offer by next September.

In his final speech as chairman, Anthony Hewson, who received the patron's award, said disabled people must not be buffeted by the changing winds of Government. It was up to Scope to unite with other organisations and take the lead.

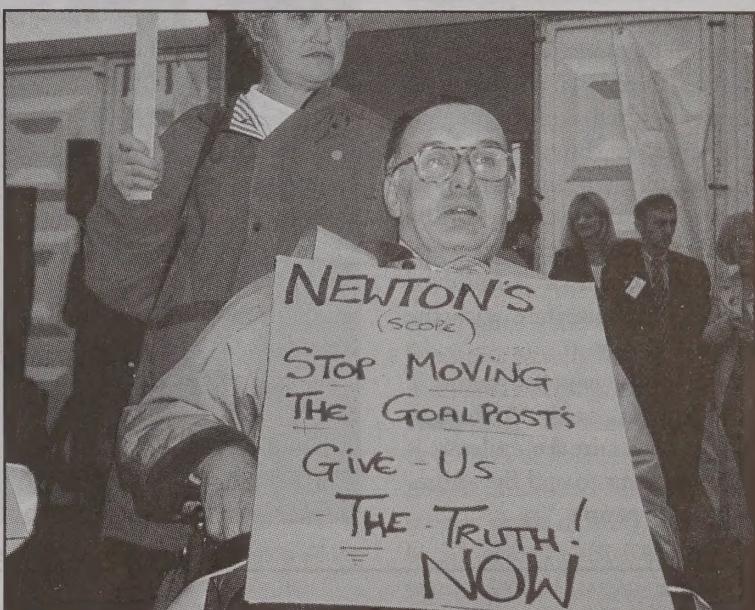
"We must make sure the priorities of disabled people and their families are clearly articulated and understood."

He asked why no one knew

how many children were born each year with disability, why so much bureaucracy surrounded their lives, and what the real costs of disability were.

He was proud of helping to change the charity's name and bringing in the membership scheme – putting service users and their advocates at the centre of what Scope does. "They should always lead the debate."

He said: "If Government is really serious about disability issues, they have got to engage meaningfully with disabled people."



John Guttridge, a worker for 32 years at the Scope-owned wheelchair manufacturer, Newton Products, protests at the conference against the firm's sell-off, due to sustained losses. He said: "Scope is not treating us with dignity – I'm disgusted." Chairman Jim Hoskisson confirmed Scope was negotiating with an un-named company, but assured workers: "The welfare of people is clearly in our minds". How many disabled people Scope employs is unknown.

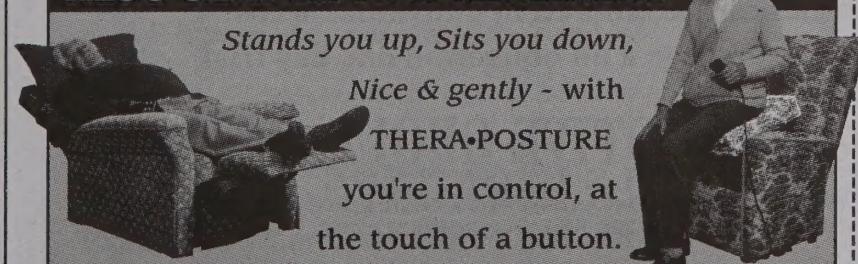
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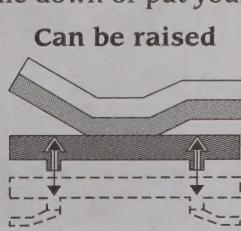
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A fit of impulse

A new device which transmits impulses can help to reduce seizures in people with epilepsy.

The Cyberonics implant, developed in the US, has been placed under the collarbone of a teenager with epilepsy in the first operation of its kind to be carried out in Scotland.

Lisa Morrison, 13, from Dundee, had the operation at Ninewells Hospital in October. Now surgeons are waiting to see whether it has been successful before operating on her two seven-year-old twin sisters who have the condition.

The implant sends out signals through wires to the vagus nerve in the neck, which in turn carries signals to the parts of the brain which control fits.

When Lisa shows signs of a fit, her mother runs a magnet over her collarbone. The implant sends emergency pulses to the brain. It is believed these pulses interfere with the onset of the fit.

Consultant neurosurgeon, T R K Varma, said: "Although this is not a cure for epilepsy, it has been seen to end fits entirely in some people."



Needles needless: mother Jill Palmer with Alice

THE MIRROR

HRT risks increase

A review of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has found that women on the drug have a slightly increased risk of developing breast cancer, which increases the longer the therapy is used.

The paper, *Breast Cancer and HRT*, published by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF), involved over 150,000 women in 21 countries.

It found that two extra cases of breast cancer would be diagnosed in women between the ages of 50 and 70, in addition to the 45 cases per 1,000 women that would already have been diagnosed.

The ICRF points out the findings should be weighed alongside the benefits of HRT, such as a reduction in the risks of developing heart disease or osteoporosis.

Chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, Professor Michael Rawlins, said: "This does not mean you

should stop taking HRT. If you are concerned, you should make an appointment with your doctor. Women should also have regular screening."

New test for Down's

A blood test could be used to detect Down's Syndrome with the results ready the next day.

This will mean expectant mothers like Jill Palmer will no longer have to go through the current test for Down's syndrome: amniocentesis, where a long needle is inserted through the stomach and into the womb.

Such tests are offered to mothers over 35 who have an increased risk of having a baby with Down's. There can be a four week wait for results and the technique can also cause miscarriage.

The new procedure, which involves taking a blood sample from the mother's arm, was developed by doctors at Nottingham City Hospital.

Some of the baby's cells are carried in the mother's blood. These are separated and tested for Down's Syndrome.

A joint success

New research into arthritic finger joints could mean an end to stiff and swollen hands.

A team of researchers from Durham University has developed an artificial joint which, when fitted, is supported by the natural ligaments of the human joint and acts as a shield to the bone beneath.

The new joint will only replace the diseased cartilage found on the ends of the fingers and the operation involves minimal removal of bone.

Current prostheses improve the appearance of the hands but do not strengthen grip as the new joint will.

The charity, Action Research, has given almost £147,000 for research on this and other projects to develop artificial joints.

Director, Anne Luther, said the first operation took place in September: "It has taken a lot of time and effort to get to this stage but soon we shall know how successful the operation is.

"We hope that this new finger joint will be as effective in relieving pain and increasing dexterity as the artificial hip has been to millions of people."



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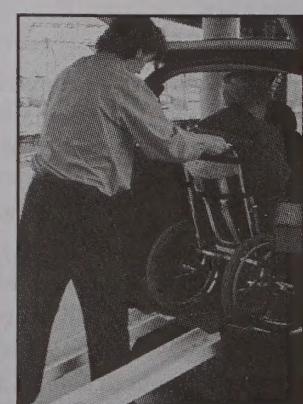
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Happy birthday DDA

Caroline Gooding charts the first year of the Disability Discrimination Act



As a trainer and consultant, I spent the whole of last year talking to people about the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) – local authorities, local advice networks, groups of disabled people, trade unionists, lawyers and businesses.

Many larger firms, Government departments and local authorities have been reviewing employment practices, incorporating the new legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees.

A lot more activity has taken place on the employment front than in relation to service provision. This might be because the most powerful element of the DDA – the obligation to remove institutional and environmental barriers by "reasonable adjustments" – is not yet in force.

There are only an enlightened few, such as banks and supermarkets, who have heard of the Act and decided to do something about it. When I talk to disabled people, I get an entirely different view.

At a recent DIAL (Disablement Information Advice Line) workshop, one adviser wryly commented that many clients contacting them had expected life to change for the better after 2 December 1996, when the DDA came into force, but were puzzled and disappointed to see no visible improvements. Another visually impaired woman felt access to public transport had got worse.

We talked about whether she could bring a case under the DDA but the woman did not want to engage in lengthy, confusing legal proceedings. This reflects many people's experience of the DDA. The exclusions and complexity of the law has made it irrelevant to the problems many disabled people face.

The absence of a Disability Rights Commission or legal aid to pay for legal representation is undoubtedly the main reason

for the low number of cases brought under the DDA. About 750 employment cases had been brought up to the end of August, which means we are likely to see a total of about 1,200 cases brought in the first year. This is well short of the Government estimates of 3,000.

Nevertheless, these numbers far exceed the paltry 39 cases brought against service providers over the same period.

There are a number of explanations for why so few service cases have been brought. One must be that individuals have to pay £65 to take a case to county court, while there is no charge for industrial tribunals, which enforce employment provisions.

We have no reported decisions on these service cases, but we are getting the first few decisions in the employment field and the picture is not particularly encouraging.

'The exclusions and complexity of the law has made the law irrelevant to many disabled people'

A number of cases have been struck out on the basis that the employers were excluded because they had less than 20 employees. Others have failed because the applicant was not considered disabled enough for the DDA to give protection.

One case in Manchester bears out the two biggest criticisms of the DDA – its narrow definition of disability and the absence of legal support for people claiming disability discrimination.



Unhappy: Disabled protestors at the launch of the DDA BRENT MOORE

Ernest Hopkins' employer admitted he had been dismissed from his job as an HGV fitter because of rheumatoid arthritis, but argued that he could not claim DDA protection because he was not disabled under the terms of the Act.

The tribunal agreed that he was not "disabled enough" to claim under the DDA, as his condition did not have a "substantial" adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. However, had Mr Hopkins had the advantage of legal advice, he could have pointed out that because rheumatoid arthritis is "progressive", he was in fact covered by the DDA.

A handful of people have won cases and more have achieved

settlements, with employers caving in before a tribunal hearing is held.

But what about the future, and the New Labour Government, swept into power with a manifesto commitment to comprehensive civil rights

for disabled people? The initial signs were not hopeful but in October, Andrew Smith, the Secretary of State for Employment with responsibility for disability rights, announced that the Government would adopt a three pronged approach to moving forward on civil rights. Firstly, the duty under the DDA for service providers to make reasonable adjustments to their policies and premises would begin to be brought into force; secondly, a Disability Rights Commission, with enforcement powers, would be introduced and finally, a Ministerial Task Force would be set up to "drive forward" comprehensive civil rights.

The absence of any timetable for any of these measures is not encouraging. Whoever is appointed to the Task Force, civil rights is too important to leave to a handful of individuals sitting in committee. We need to find new ways of engaging disabled people, and other affected parties in the debate, perhaps by adopting the Irish approach where public meetings are held by their Advisory Commission to allow for fuller discussion.

I also suspect that the Government will need the full support of the disability movement, to ensure that rights for disabled people do not slip off the legislative agenda.

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Roy calls the tune

Rod Hermeston
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Roy Taylor

Mature rocker Roy Taylor has a passion for the guitar. After a hard day's work as director of community services at Kingston upon Thames Social Services, he often retires to the garden shed for a strum.

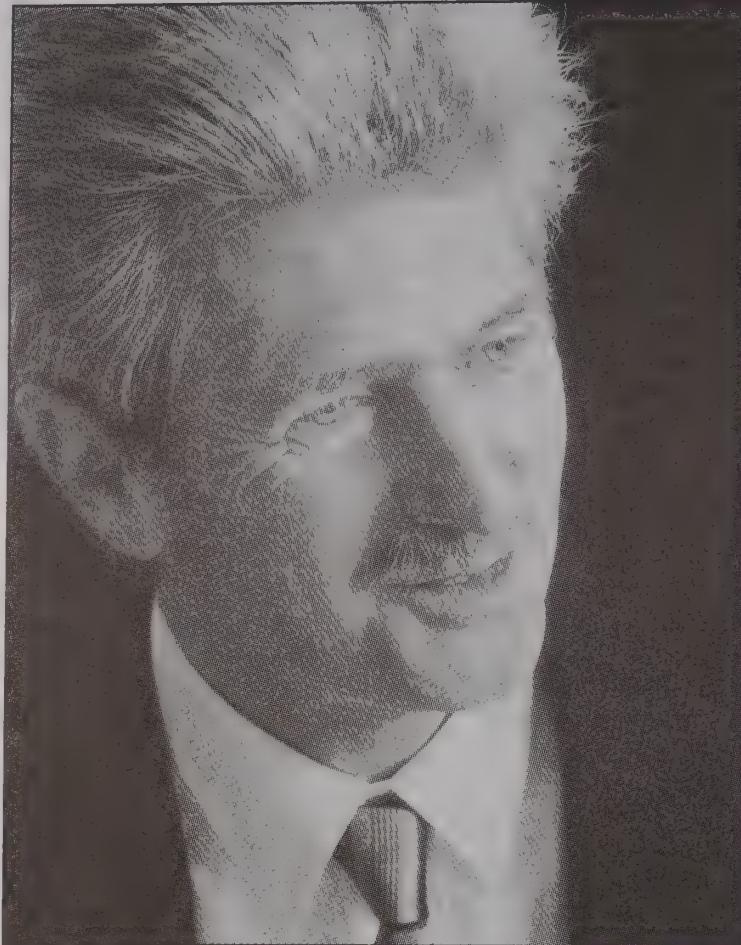
Now he is calling the tune, as the newly elected president of the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS).

A keen musician at university, he played in bands and toured the country, at one point backing the group Marmalade.

Mr Taylor, 50, also enjoys cycling and came up with the idea for the annual ADSS charity bike ride. "Directors and others from the disability movement raise cash for local charities. We've had six now. In Kingston I raise cash for a local drugs unit. Over the years we have raised about a quarter of a million."

After studying social work at Brunel University and doing voluntary work with disabled people, Mr Taylor went into social services, where he has worked for 27 years.

He became director at Kingston in 1989, just before the Government decided that the council's direct payments scheme was unlawful. Spurred



In charge: Mr Taylor wants to give power to the people

into action by this, Mr Taylor joined the ADSS Disabilities Committee, which he chaired for five years. He headed its push for direct payments. The law was changed in April this year and they are now legal.

"I thought it would produce better value for money, but more importantly I had seen how liberating it could be for a disabled person to control their

own budget. It puts the power in the hands of the person who should have it. They will get the things that suit them at the time it suits them."

"Direct payments are pretty much a jewel in the crown compared to most of the world."

Frances Hasler, of the National Centre for Independent Living, says: "He was turned onto the idea by disabled people in his locality and had the imagination to see that it was a good one. He has backed it to the hilt ever since."

Now Mr Taylor, who is married with children, intends to promote disability in his new position. The family has experience of disability.

"In my year as president I will want it to feature strongly. That

is not to say that in individual councils when it comes to cuts disability services won't suffer – for instance to protect a frontline child abuse team. But the profile within ADSS is very high and I intend to keep it that way."

Disabled people have their part to play in this, he says.

"We are getting an increasingly articulate and well resourced disability rights movement, able to put its case."

"Consultation is the way forward. The right way is to pump prime local representative groups."

In general, he believes councils could work harder.

"I want best practice in every authority on disability matters."

"Direct payments are pretty much a jewel in the crown compared to most of the world."

But he has become president at a time when social services face tough financial constraints and hard decisions. The House of Lords' Gloucestershire ruling in March allows local authorities to take their resources into account when assessing someone's needs. Charging practices and provision vary greatly while nationally social services departments made £250 million in cuts this year.

The ADSS has asked the Government to extend the terms of reference for its Royal Commission on long-term care to deal with this.

"I'd like to see standards that are clear throughout the country so that we can avoid justice by geography. So that

wherever you live you know there are a certain set of rights and services that you ought to be able to expect. But as soon as you get into that you get into the formula for distributing the Government grant which produces different effects in different parts of the country."

He has welcomed Health Secretary Frank Dobson's proposal for a General Social Care Council, similar to the Law Society.

"We've been calling for this for some time. It could set up a register and issue standards of accountability and enable individuals to say that they are registered and can offer a certain standard of service."

He also welcomes the £300 million announced to help health and social services to avoid a crisis this winter.

However, social services only had one week to get bids in for the money which was to be handed out by the health service and Mr Taylor fears the money might not get to areas of social services which need it.

"You may get acute and community health providers meeting with health commissioners and marginalising social services. But Mr Dobson has pointed out that he wants to see evidence of joint working, so those health authorities just sending in bids for health are going to be wasting their time."

Recent Government actions have led to suspicions that it does not trust social services. There are also concerns it may overlook social services as it concentrates on health and education to tackle social exclusion.

"There have been some situations that the Labour Government has been unhappy with and has gone in to address, like Sefton. But Mr Dobson has said a higher priority will be given to social services. I hope we are not caught in a pincer movement between health and education."

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THE LONDON
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SHOW

Martin Renouf kept on the straight and narrow – but he dreamed of more



Give us the runaround, please

Visiting the Motor Show in October took me back to my student days. I was pushed in my wheelchair by friends from Battersea to Earls Court. When I got there, they wouldn't let me in because the wheelchair was considered a fire risk.

Those days have thankfully gone, but after picking up my press pass I still had to get up a flight of steps. The chairlift was rather temperamental, so the friendly staff had to lift me past.

Enter fantasy land, and where would you start if you had just won the Lottery? How about at Ferrari, now revelling in their recent Formula One acclaim?

For half the money you could buy a BMW 540 Touring with a 4.5 litre V8 engine and a five speed automatic gearbox. Not quite the same image but much more practical: the BMW estate version with lots of luggage space and a low load platform.

I can't count on the Lottery, so I hurried past the gleaming Rolls Royces.

At the Seat stand I wanted to see the new, small, power-assisted steering, automatic Arosa. I could see it but not get into it because it was parked in a corner to give maximum room for the paella refreshments. Pleasure before work; must have more of this. Anyway, the Arosa is available through Motability, with a small deposit surcharge.

I could get to Seat's MPV, the Alhambra. An interesting size,

smaller and cheaper than the Ford Galaxy but bigger than the Renault Megane Scenic. Optional swivel front seats may be useful for some disabled passengers or drivers.

Speaking of small MPV vehicles, much fuss has been made about the new Mercedes A class, particularly its safety performance in a crash. Its stylish exterior and interior make good use of the available space. It will also have interesting engine and transmission options, 5-speed automatic and semi-automatic. But for me one thing lets it down: the height of the rear sill. It is some inches higher than the Renault Megane Scenic, so if this is important for loading wheelchairs, it is a non-starter.

In the Scenic, I found a folding wheelchair would fit below the rear parcel shelf in its lowest position, leaving lots of luggage space on top. With hardly a sill to speak of, the chair could slide under the shelf. Worth considering.

Peugeot was showing the new 306 Estate. A useful extension to the model range but with no automatic option at the moment.

Citroen displayed a version of a "person carrier" based on their Berlingo van, with integral cab and van roof. This is one of few options in the 3-door estate market.

Ford had no new models but showed the Fiesta automatic

with the Techmobility hand control conversions. The mechanism is housed in the steering column cowling and provides comparable protection to the standard vehicle in a crash.

The new Vauxhall Astra looks significantly different from previous models, more like its bigger brother the Vectra. With a fully-galvanised body, it will have a 12 year anti-perforation warranty when it goes on sale next year. It is very spacious with more shoulder room for front occupants and knee room for rear seat occupants. I was able to stow my wheelchair fairly easily inside the previous model, so I hope the improvements help loading and stowage and, once stowed, give enough space for people in the front.

The Vauxhall stand was hosting a Corsa-based driving

simulator for use by BSM, which uses the latest computer technology. Could they not be equipped with a range of interchangeable hand controls? A useful addition to the relatively simple simulators used by assessment centres to measure response times.

Motability had a stand displaying the information available on its Web site. I suppose this is a sign of things to come and one day it may be possible to use the Web for most of our dealings with Motability.

The World of Vauxhall on a CD contained annual reports, video sequences, safety and environmental data, but not multimedia specification of their products. The floppy disk from Daewoo did.

Access to the stands via ramps was good. Toyota and Seat



From left to right: Vauxhall's new Astra, Seat's Alhambra Projekt Zwo, and the Seat optional swivel front seats

made a feature of ramps to the centre of their stands.

Some futuristic designs at the Show demonstrated the possibilities for small city runabouts. Why can't we see a concept "accessibility" vehicle crammed with features that would suit elderly or disabled people in a city car, I wonder?



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Renault Megane Scenic with wheelchair loaded below parcel shelf
MARTIN RENOUF

Letters to the Editor



Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ
Minicom: 0171-436 9914 Fax: 0171-436 4582
E-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Students: nothing to fear

I read with interest about the fears that some students with disabilities had expressed about the new loans based system of student support the Government is introducing (DN October).

I would like to explain how groundless those fears are and how this Government is determined that disability should not bar access to higher education.

On 23 July, the independent Dearing Committee reported that the system of funding higher education needed to be changed to avoid continued cuts in standards and funding.

The Government's proposals will mean that from the 1998/99 academic year, new entrants to higher education will be liable to make a contribution of up to £1,000 each year towards the costs of their tuition. At the same time, the current mixture of maintenance grants and loans will be phased out and replaced with a new loans-based system.

The level of contribution towards tuition fees and the amount of maintenance loan to which an individual student is entitled will depend on the income of the student or his or her parents or spouse according to the student's age and circumstances. Students with a gross family income of up to about £23,000 will be unlikely to pay anything at all towards their tuition costs and will receive a full maintenance loan; and about a third more will receive some support towards their fees.

Students will not start to repay their maintenance loans until they have graduated and are earning enough to do so. The level of repayments will depend on individual graduates' incomes, in contrast to the

existing scheme which requires students to repay their loans in equal instalments over a fixed period. The first £10,000 of annual income will be disregarded in calculating repayments.

At present, disabled students eligible for a mandatory award are also eligible for three supplementary allowances called Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs). In 1997/98 the allowances will pay up to £5,100 a year for a non-medical personal helper; up to £3,840 over the whole course for major items of specialist equipment; and a general allowance of up to £1,275 a year to cover any other costs relating to disability and study not covered by the others.

These allowances are at present included with the main grant and are subject to means testing. From 1997/98, DSAs will no longer be means tested. They will continue to be paid – in full – in the form of a grant, so disabled students will not need to borrow more than their able bodied counterparts as a result of their disabilities.

The Government is also giving serious consideration to the Dearing recommendations that eligibility for DSAs be extended to part-time students, post-graduate students and those people with disabilities who wish to acquire a second higher education qualification.

Further details are given in a Government publication, *Investing in the Future: Supporting Students in Higher Education*. Call our free information line on 0800 731 9133 or e-mail us at info@dfe.gov.uk.

Andrew Smith
Minister for Employment,
Welfare to Work and Equal
Opportunities,
London SW1

DSS assessor; I merely enjoyed my therapy with his assistance."

Hammer that stammer

A son cured his dad of his stammer via an accidental blow to the head with a broom handle. Rumours that the police special patrol group have offered to assist the NHS further with research into this variety of therapy remain unconfirmed.

Limited capacity gets recognition

DN's coverage (November) of the Lord Chancellor's announcement of a consultative paper to forward the Law Commission's report on mental incapacity repeated the view expressed by *The Times* that the proposals are a charter for euthanasia.

In doing this, DN missed an opportunity to welcome something fundamental for many people with disabilities and has taken a very narrow perspective on proposed reforms which are likely to bring about new concepts on decision making for them.

The principle for many of the proposals is that people may be able to understand the consequences of some decisions but not others, eg someone with learning disabilities may understand the consequences of marriage but not those of taking out an unsecured bank loan.

The proposals say that if a person understands the consequences they should be able to make their own decision in that area. This means the concept of limited capacity is recognised. The proposals also accept there must be regular reviews as someone's understanding in these areas may change.

Ginny Jenkins

Director, Action on Elder Abuse,

London SW16

Student diary

'I fall into a whirlpool of loneliness...'

By Marigold Hope

If you came to visit the university site this year, you might think that the third years had all dropped off the planet during the summer, or dropped out of university. No longer can they be seen milling around George Square in their multitudes.

They are not, however, an extinct species. Some of them have gone to study abroad for a year. As for the rest, they are still there. If you look hard and are lucky, you may spot them in a quiet corner of the library, hidden away like moles under insurmountable piles of work. Because my friends and I have suddenly become focused and serious about our work, we attempt to do a 10am-6pm day, but even with a routine a guilty voice can plague you. You come home and chat to your flatmate and then a voice in your head (the guilt) starts: "I planned to finish that reading by tonight; I should be doing it now".

This year, though, I am free of flat angst. I am really happy living with two of my close friends. It's both relaxing and



loads of fun. Despite all the work, I am still seeing friends and going out. But we all have to make more of an effort because you don't just bump into people anymore.

My friends are all very supportive about my legs. Dealing with my disabilities feels like doing an extra A level and it is hard finding the time and energy for it now.

Part of the problem for me is that my condition – unusual leg deformities – makes it unclear as to how exactly they affect my mobility. For example, whether the stress it puts on my right hip muscle, foot and lower back is just painful or painful and damaging.

GPs have been of little help, and finding a good specialist to manage my case is easier said than done.

Without answers and explanations, I often feel I fall into a whirlpool of loneliness, confusion and physical pain. I rarely cry about it, pushing the immense frustration and upset deep to the back of my mind.

I imagine these lonely moments are shared by a lot of other disabled people.

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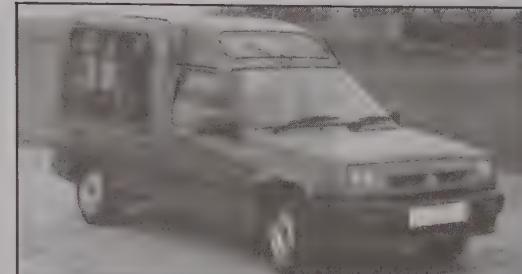
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DN's diary

By Dan Batten

Gun law

Disabled gun enthusiasts have been excluded from an imminent ban on the ownership of handguns after it was argued that target shooting was "therapeutic" for wheelchair users. Could this begin a trend? "No, M'lud, I did not murder the

Treats under the tree

Anne Davies and Damien Vessey take a look at special gifts for Christmas

Stuck for gift ideas this Christmas? Here's a few ideas to help you before you hit the shops.

If you are a keen gardener, the RNIB has a specially created perfumed rose called Perception, which was launched at this year's Chelsea flower show. (See page 31, *Special offers*, for further details.)

And if watching repeats on TV gets you down over Christmas, the charity has also produced 34 audio-described videos. New releases include *The Rock* and *Santa Claus* (above), *Emma*, and Walt Disney's *The Rescuers*. Its catalogue has plenty of great ideas for useful, practical presents as well, tel: 0171-388 1266 (ext 2296/2326/2331).

Practical presents

The Tefal Revolutionary Avanti toaster (below) has a triangle, coolwall design and flips two slices of toast out at you. £29.99, from Index, Currys, Alders, Argos or Dixons.

There's also the Haden compact, cordless kettle. It is light, easy-to-use and comes in a range of bright colours, £20, tel: (01543) 676624.

How about a set of four stainless steel hob covers to hide any food spills? They cost £15.95 a set, from the Cotswold Company, tel: 0990-502 054.

To work off your Christmas excess, get on your bike with the new Balance Trainers (above, centre). These stabilizers can be adjusted to four positions to make cycling safer for children and adults. £12.75 (plus £4.99 P&P) from Good Designs, tel: (01248) 713624.



Two slices please: The Avanti



The Christmas movie: Santa Claus

WALT DISNEY

Keeping warm

Keep your relatives cosy with Scandinavian-style knotted slipper boots, which have slip-resistant soles. Sizes 3-8, £8.99 from British Red Cross mail order, tel: (01283) 506109.

Totes micro fleece gloves with non-slip grip at £12, and fleece neck scarf-wrap at £12 will keep you warm on cold winter nights. From House of Fraser

and Debenhams, tel: (01277) 630277.

Good value, and available almost everywhere, are chenille gloves at £5, scarves at £10 and hats at £10. In red, blueberry, chocolate or black, from Tesco.

For the kids, or adults with a sense of humour, fish-shaped hot water bottle covers and a floppy dog foot warmer (right) from Tesco will bring a smile to their face on Christmas morning. At £12, the fish come in bright red/blue stripes, or yellow with coloured flashes, and the dog is textured brown.



What's in DN next month?



- **DN SURVEY**
Are you sitting comfortably in the skies?
- **BENEFIT FROM THE SYSTEM (1)**
The first in our series on benefits
- **RICA REPORT**
A discerning look at tumble driers
- **FASHION**
New Year - new look. How to revamp your image

Plus the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 23 December.

New Year - new look. How to revamp your image

Stocking fillers

If you're sorted for presents, how about some of these smaller gift ideas?

Here are three from the Cotswold Company, tel: 0990 552 054. Attach the Key Finder to your keys and never lose them again. Just whistle and it beeps and flashes its light, even from closed drawers. £5.95 (inc. batteries plus P&P).

If you have trouble using keys, the Key Enlarger, at £6.99, is a plastic handle that slips onto your key and gives more leverage for turning.

The Steering Wheel Spinner will help if you have trouble parking or reversing your car. It clips onto the steering wheel and the rotating ball makes light work of turning the wheel, £9.95.



Scope also produces gifts that would be ideal for stockings, tel: 0181-680 1730.

If you have trouble reading, especially at night, try their Pocket Magnifier and Torch. The magnifying glass has an in-built light - ideal for map reading, £4.50. Brighten any child's Christmas day with the Butterworth bear or the Soft Touch bear (above) at £4.99 and £7.99 respectively.

If you fancy a bit of music on the go, Boots have two mini radios with earphones that will fit in the smallest of pockets. £8 and £10 respectively, tel: (08450) 70 80 90.

Let Santa pamper you with handmade cosmetics from Lush. Massage bars, bath melts, soaps and more, tel: 0171-624 8311.

The toys listed are suitable for children. But we recommend you check for age suitability before buying.

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Learning Centre. The Bathtime Shower, £7.99, suctions to the bath side and has an easy pump action button. The Water Pump, £2.99, is clear with an easy-to-use handle. Create bubbles, whirlpools and waves with the Bathtime Bubble Beater (below), £4.99. Add the bubble bath and start winding! Tel: 0990 352 352.

Encourage the kids to burn off all their excess energy with the Adjustable Netball Goal from Toys for the Handicapped (TFH). The net can be very

up. Made of stainless steel, they come gift boxed, £5.99. Tel: (01283) 506109.

Christmas Day is normally lively. Try making it loud as well with the RNIB's Little Tikes' Megaphone, £14.99. It has a pitch bender, volume limiter



Christmas cuddles and bathtime bubbles

Whilst gifts are for grown-ups, toys are most definitely for kids, and boy can they be fun!

These colourful and cheery Bananas in Pyjamas (above) are made of soft material, are 30cm tall and cost £6 from Tomy, tel: 0171-430 2276.

Another soft toy available is Noah's Ark (far right) which comes with 5 pairs of animals, Mr and Mrs Noah and a roof fastening. £26.95 from Brainwaves, tel: 0990 202 326.

Soft toys can be educational too, such as My Alphabet Bag (above right), which has one padded animal or object for every letter (£26.95), or My Calendar and Weather wall hanging, (£29.95) guaranteed to

turn every child into Michael Fish.

Make bath-times fun with intriguing toys from the Early



low or up to 8ft high. It also has an attached ball (with bats) for a "swingball" game. £48.50 (plus vat), tel: (01299) 827820.

TFH also make boardgames suitable for the whole family to play, such as velcro solitaire/chinese chequers (a reversible board) at £12.50, a giant snakes and ladders/ludo board at £19.50 and a large draughts set at £4.75.

Keep children at the dining table for longer with help from the British Red Cross. Give them a personalised, ceramic breakfast set with the alphabet on, £14.99. Or give them a personalised child's cutlery set to make them feel really grown-

and in-built sounds such as orangutan and siren. Tel: 0171-388 1266 (ext 2296).

There's also the Little Tikes' Tape Recorder. Brightly coloured, it has large buttons, a built-in microphone and a free-standing microphone, £27.99.

Make learning to tell the time fun with the motion clock from Tesco. It has a moving, skiing penguin and clouds, £10.



We have listed toys that are suitable for children. But we recommend you check for age suitability before buying.

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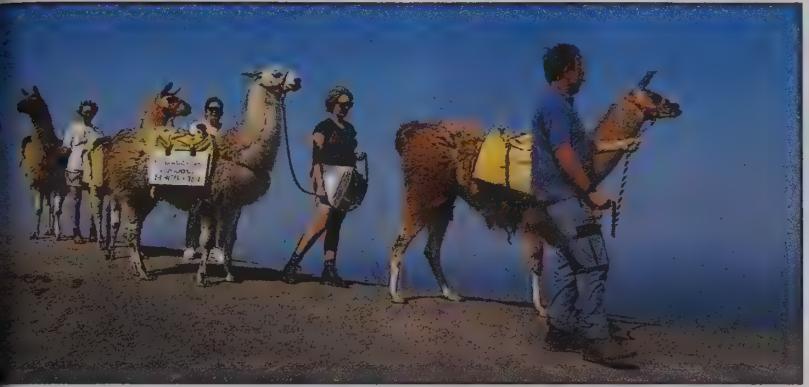
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DN



Give turkey a miss

finds four unusual ideas for an alternative Christmas this year



Walk with a llama

Alternative to cuddling the dog in front of the TV this winter, cuddling a llama on the heath Yorkshire moors.

Le Wright and his wife, Ruth, are much in love with these relatively placid, curious animals that bought four of them and have

been running cross-country llama treks for four and a half years, first in Norfolk and now in North Yorkshire.

Fellow llama lovers drive to the tiny village of Staintondale, near Scarborough, where they are introduced to the four willing trekkers,

Jose, Miguel, Carlos and Pedro, who will lead you on three or four-hour trails all over the moors.

The llamas carry your food and supplies for the day but are not strong enough to carry the weight of heavy humans and don't like torrential rain.

The treks vary from season to season with routes that take in both the moors and the coastline. In December and January, treks include a stop off at a local pub for a Christmas meal.

The cost ranges from £25-£29 per person, tel: (01723) 871234 (See special offer p31)

Your good health

are feeling particularly good want to get away from all those obligations, why not try a health

are two with accessible beds, Henlow Grange in Bedfordshire and Springs Hydro in Hertfordshire.

is offering a two-night post-Christmas package for £199.95 per person in a twin room (assistants get a 50% discount). This includes a full-



body massage, a facial or scalp massage, a sun bed or body statistics analysis, and a half-hour manicure, tel: (01203) 690300.

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Think of others...



Crisis: a worthwhile Christmas

Charities like Crisis have vacancies for volunteers to help out over Christmas and the New Year with setting up shelters, running them and clearing up once it is all over.

Working as a volunteer is not going to radically change the life of someone on the street but it does help to make what can be one of the loneliest times of the year a bearable and successful few days.

Even if you don't get a kick out of helping someone else, volunteering can be great fun: you meet lots of different people and learn to work as a team.

Development manager for winter services at Crisis, Cathy Lee, says: "It is a very valuable and enjoyable Christmas, a really good experience."

For more information and a volunteer pack, call Crisis, tel: 0171-377 0489.

pride themselves on being accessible, including the smaller, independent hotels such as the Clovelly in Salisbury (left), which emphasises personal service.

There are many symbols denoting accessible accommodation, but if you want to be really sure check to see if it is registered with the English Tourist Board, tel: 0181-563 3379, or the Holiday Care Service, tel: (01293) 774535.

Get away from it all

Not everybody wants to, or can, entertain family and friends at Christmas. You might want to get away from it all and let someone else do the cooking, cleaning and so on.

If that's the case, why not book yourself into a hotel over the holiday? Many hotels now



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Which? Wine Guide 1998, £13.99, (above left) has over 200 UK wine merchants and gives an A-Z country listing of wine-producing areas, recommending producers and vintages.

Which? Good Food Guide 1998, £14.99, (above right) is the guide for eating out, reviewing 1,300 restaurants throughout the UK.

A Genius in the Family, £16.99, Chatto & Windus, (right) chronicles the life of cellist



Jacqueline Du Pré, who died of multiple sclerosis in 1987. Her brother and sister describe what it was like to live with a musical sibling.

ACTRESS JANE ASHER'S TURKEY, ALMOND AND CRANBERRY FLAN

6oz plain flour
3oz cheddar cheese, grated
pinch of mustard powder
4oz butter, melted
water to mix, 1/2oz butter
1 small onion, chopped
10oz cooked turkey, diced
1oz flaked almonds
1oz cranberries
1tbsp chopped parsley
salt and pepper
7fl oz tub crème fraîche
two eggs, size 3

Preheat the oven to 190°C.

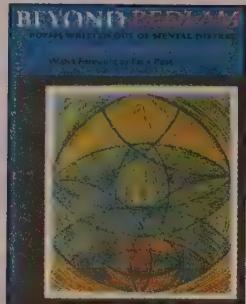
Books yule love

We choose some literary stocking fillers to inspire and entertain – win them on page 31



The crew of the Time and Tide boat describe their yacht race in On Equal Terms, £16.99, Simon & Schuster.

Beyond Bedlam, £7.95, Anvil, (below) features work by poets who have been through the mental health service, from William Blake to Sylvia Plath – a telling insight into mental distress.



My World, £10.95, The Book Guild, (above left) is the autobiography of Gail Taylor. Branded "a cabbage" as a child, she now speaks seven languages.

Hearing Dog: The Story of Jenny and Conny, £16.99, Souvenir Press, (above right) is a tale of one campaigning woman and her trusty canine friend.

Cook up a treat for your table

Try these recipes from Arthritis Care (right) and British Diabetic Association



Sieve the flour, add the cheese and mustard powder and mix. Add the melted butter and 1-2tbsp of water and bind together to form a soft dough.

Mould the pastry into a 20cm (8in) loose bottom flan tin, prick the base and bake blind

for 15 minutes.

Melt the remaining butter in a saucepan, add the onion and cook gently for 2-3 minutes. Add the turkey, almonds, cranberries, freshly chopped parsley and seasoning and mix. Beat together the crème fraîche and eggs and mix into turkey mixture.

Pour into pastry case and cook for 35-40 minutes.

CELEBRATION CAKE

5oz plain wholemeal flour
half tsp salt
1tsp ground cinnamon



1tsp ground mixed spice
half tsp grated nutmeg

8oz raisins
8oz currants
8oz sultanas
4oz glace cherries, rinsed, dried and quartered
4oz flaked almonds
5oz polyunsaturated margarine
2oz soft brown sugar
4 medium eggs, beaten
3tbsp brandy
1tsp bicarbonate of soda
2tsp warm water
2tbsp additional brandy

Grease and line a 20cm (8in) round or 18cm (7in) square cake tin with a double thickness of greaseproof paper. Tie a double thickness of greaseproof paper around the outside.

Sift together the flour, salt and spices, adding any bran remaining in the sieve to the bowl. Mix together the fruit and nuts. Cream the margarine and sugar together until pale and creamy.

Gradually beat in the eggs, adding a tablespoon of flour with each egg. Fold in the remaining flour, fruit and brandy. Mix the bicarbonate of soda with the warm water and add to the mixture.

Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and level the surface. Make a slight dip in the centre with the back of a spoon. Place in a pre-heated oven at 150°C (300°F) Gas Mark 2 for approximately two and a half hours.

Cool in the tin for 30 minutes. Turn out on to a wire rack, remove paper and allow to cool completely before decorating with nuts and dried fruit.

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Broadening Your Horizons - even further

Theatre

Jo Harris is a 15-year-old girl from Shrewsbury who needs a heart lung transplant but is refused a place on transplant waiting lists because she has Down's Syndrome.

Inspired by her true story, Strathcona Theatre Company have devised *Change of Heart*, an imaginative new production which draws on Hans Christian Anderson's *The Snow Queen*.

The story of Greta, who needs a transplant, and her friend Karl, is interwoven with the fairy tale of a broken mirror that pierces people's hearts and turns them into ice. The result is a mixture of fantasy and reality that plays with various meanings of "a change of heart".

At the heart of the play is the absurdity of the claim that Greta's, or Jo's, or any other 15-year-old's life is not worth extending. The portrayal of Greta as a teenager with attachments (to her family and friends, especially Karl) and worries (such as "I'm scared of the operation") that anyone in her position would have, conveys the absurdity eloquently.

Film

Michael Turner



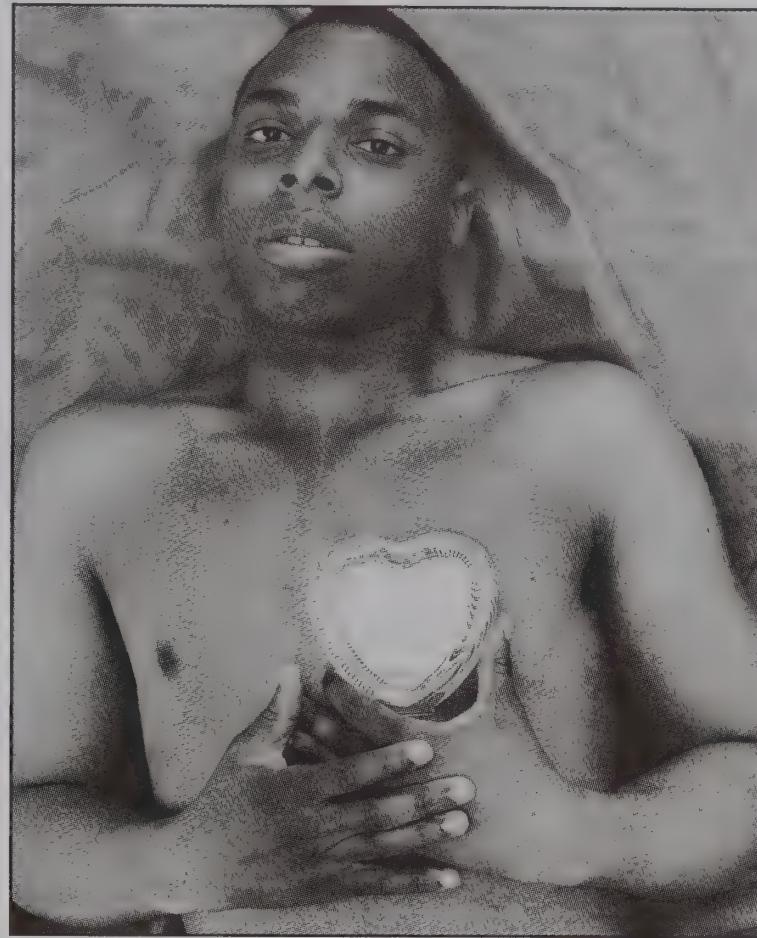
While *Shooting Fish* is a reasonably amiable comedy caper which forms the latest instalment in the much-touted revival of the British film industry, its portrayal of disability is enough to make you scream, "Come back Arnie, all is forgiven."

It follows the adventures of two likely-lads, English and American, (Dan Futterman and Stuart Townsend), pulling off con jobs on unsuspecting business people and home-owners.

Along the way they team up with Georgie (Kate Beckinsale) and the rather flimsy plot is about her struggle to save the "home" where her brother, Robin (Darren Renouf), who has learning difficulties, lives.

The rest of the film is reminiscent of an updated Ealing comedy. People with

Change of Heart



Heart in the right place: Sheldon Antoine in Strathcona's new show
HUGO GLENDINNING

Her art competition win, and a dramatic scene when she

saves a life, seem more concerned with trying to show

learning difficulties are there purely for pathos, showing up the Futterman and Townsend characters as being really not so bad after all.

While Robin is played by an actor with learning difficulties, as are the other residents of the "home", he is virtually excluded from the plot and has no part in the climatic heist. To cap it all, the fraudulent-threesome are given a heroes welcome at stately home turned residential home where Robin and friends live.

Shooting Fish is not meant to be taken seriously, but the assertion that people with learning difficulties are best off living in groups in stately retreats should not be acceptable in any genre. To portray people with learning difficulties as grateful for such segregation is simply inaccurate.

While not wishing to see Lottery funders take on the role of thought police, they should be doing something to facilitate the involvement of disabled people in the arts to ensure that trite images like this are not funded in the future.

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, has Panto Picnics (*Cinderella*) for visually or hearing-impaired children. Tactile set, programmes in braille, large print or on cassette, and full signing. Box office, tel: (01203) 553055.

Flagrant Nights presents Mat Fraser and others, Union Chapel, Studio Theatre, London, 5 Dec.

how exceptional she is, which surely isn't the point. Then, again, perhaps they're not so out of place in a fairy tale.

There are times when the complex storyline detracts from the play's central theme. The actors seem trapped inside it; their expressiveness sometimes dampened by an overload of text that's hard to remember.

For most of the play, however, the company's use of movement, sound and light, and a highly innovative set keep the audience with them. A transparent screen, placed around Greta on her hospital bed while her father and doctors discuss her as if she weren't there, is disturbing and very effective. And a choreographed winter play scene is light and fluid and a pleasure to watch.

This is a play whose time has come. It raises awareness of an outrageous practice in this country which some of us might never have known about otherwise.

Rachel Vaughan

For tour dates culminating in London, 1-20 December, tel: 0171-403 0316.

are true) is insufficient. As a piece of drama it does not work.

The story concerns four men with physical impairment who meet in their virtual universe. Across the Super Highway their frustrations and sense of injustice become distorted into a confused and dangerous creed which sees terrorism as a response to discrimination, exclusion and the threat from eugenics.

The men meet, agree upon paramilitary direct action, liberate an "oppressed" woman, then fall out in an orgy of recrimination after the death in action of their fifth member.

I could see the play was intended to be heavy with irony. But *D.A.R.E.* was not well enough written, acted or staged to allow anyone to suspend disbelief, consider the irony, learn from the satire or even laugh at the jokes.

At times the portrayal of women bordered upon misogyny. I am sure this was never intended, but when five male actors (one on video) directed by a man stage a men-only play, the sexual politics has to be spot on. Ultimately the piece was too self-indulgent and introspective to carry its message convincingly.

What little there was to commend *D.A.R.E.* came at the beginning and end. The attempt to build a theatrical representation of cyberspace using multi-media techniques was clever. The concluding video "one-liners" from real activists were honest and effective.

Dougie Herd

Television

Chris Davies

When Channel 4 announced that *Sign On*, for deaf people, was to be replaced by a series for deaf children, the response was



predictably mixed. So what does the channel do? It runs a final series of *Sign On* and then in the very same slot, the week after, puts on the new show, *The Vibe*, (25 October).

Yes, of course, deaf children have been neglected by television – and *The Vibe* does its job well – but now the needs of deaf adults are being ignored.

ITV was very proud of their children's series *Sunny's Ears*. Aimed at bringing deaf awareness to a mainstream children's audience, it stars a genuine hard of hearing girl. So far so good. But it loses touch with reality. For example, the central character is entirely verbally articulate and independent. Yet her mother uses sign language to communicate with her. It would seem this was the way the script wanted it, so they found a suitable child.

The storyline involves Sunny being saved by a dog who she then wants to keep and train as a hearing dog. Given how many people are in the profession of hearing dogs, this is another instance of dramatic licence going too far.

Over the Edge has finished but *From the Edge* (BBC2) has restarted. The standard of programmes from the BBC's Disability Programmes Unit continues to improve. I was pleased to see that *From the Edge* is inviting more audience involvement, asking for their experiences. It now has a fact sheet as well as a web site.

Talking of getting involved, let me know, again, what you think of BBC *Children in Need*. I'm involved with the national programme, checking the films about disability. Too often, though, we don't see the films that are made in the region.

Finally, the fourth full-scale documentary of Alison French (BBC2, *Timewatch*, 11 November). The implication is that she's an exceptional person – simply not true. There are many people, more impaired, who have done more for disabled people than make programmes about themselves. As an equality trainer, Alison presumably knows the disability movement frowns on individuals used as examples of the general community and large amounts of medical detail. Please BBC, no more Alison.

Look out for

The Royal Shakespeare Company has a signed performance of *Hamlet*, 10 January, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 27 January. Half-price tickets for people with disabilities and escorts. Box office, Barbican Theatre, tel: 0171-638 8891, 0171-382 7297 (minicom).

'We'll listen to problems – no one is rejected as neurotic, like we were'



Helen Peters is sure her children's learning difficulties are genetic

I have five children from the ages of 14 to 26. Two have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and the three others have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). I was also recently diagnosed with ADHD.

My three older children have now left home, but the two youngest, Steven, 16, and Richard, 14, still live at home.

Richard has ADHD, which means he is unpredictable without medication. He is unable to sit still, pay attention, or do as he is told for more

than a few minutes at a time. He is impulsive, with little regard to the consequences or potential danger of his actions. He will throw things in temper, or start fighting and hitting out to get his own way.

It is a soul-destroying life for anyone with ADHD. I have been lucky with my family and friends who have helped and supported me, but many others are not so fortunate and are treated as social outcasts.

When Richard was five it was recommended that we attend a child psychologist clinic, which we duly did for seven years. By the age of 12 his behaviour had deteriorated and he was becoming more aggressive. His school could not cope with him and we were referred to a different psychologist. It wasn't until I had spoken to him about ADHD that I was 100 per cent sure this was Richard's problem. He was given a trial of the medication Ritalin and since then he has gone from strength to strength.

It has taken 12 years for my son to say he loves me, but without medication Richard very quickly reverts back to his old behaviour, so we make sure he gets it on time.



Steven, (left) and Richard have both improved with Ritalin

Steven has dyspraxia and ADD, which means he does not always display hyperactive behavioural problems – he is more inattentive.

Steven slept 19 hours a day as a baby and as he got older he would play for hours on his own. When he started school, the teachers said he was very bright but that he walked around the classroom instead of working.

He was the same at home. He would start to do something

then forget what it was and start doing something else instead.

Steven changed schools, but it was the same old story. He kept having detentions to catch up with work. At 14, the school thought he had learning problems, and as Steven was doing so poorly he went into the dyslexic unit for extra lessons.

After reading about ADHD/ADD I realised that Steven had ADD and

dyspraxia. He is now taking Ritalin too and copes much better in school – he did well in his GCSEs.

I started a support group with another mother, Christine Spice, last year because we were not getting any help and did not want other families or children to suffer like we had.

The group now has 30 members and we listen to problems and do not reject people as neurotic because we have been rejected in the same way ourselves. We also aim to make professionals and academics more aware of this condition and the problems parents and children face.

I attended the world conference on the subject in San Antonio, USA, in October, where academics and parents discussed the causes of ADHD/ADD. It is believed that the conditions are associated with the chemicals dopamine and serotonin transporters in the brain. Genetics were also discussed, and I for one am convinced that it is a genetic disorder.

I was amazed to learn that families in America also have to fight to get their children diagnosed. Mothers were also beside themselves with worry about where to get help. Not all children are on medication and some states will not acknowledge ADD or ADHD.

One girl of about ten, who was very withdrawn, spoke of how other schoolchildren were given a bell to ring each time she misbehaved, which meant she was punished.

In the past we have spoken for these children and about them, but not to them. So before I left I suggested that children themselves should talk at the conference next year. They must be allowed to speak so others can learn from them. These children are the key if people with ADHD/ADD are to have any chance of a future.

My dream for the coming year would be to have enough money for some children in the UK to attend and speak at next year's forum in New York so they too can be given hope. I hope that one day we will bring together all children so they can speak with one voice.

Herts & District ADD/ADHD Support Group, tel: (01763) 242782.



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NO NONSENSE VEHICLE CONVERSIONS

(7) Help is at hand if you want to set up your own business, Lisa Hitchen finds

Setting up on your own can seem a daunting task, needing know-how, discipline, long hours and hard work. 40 per cent of small businesses go under in the first two years according to a survey by Barclays Bank in 1996.

On the positive side, you are your own boss and self employment allows you to



Loans of luck: Spike Breakwell

promote and develop your own ideas and work under more flexible conditions than might be possible with an employer.

This is often important for people with disabilities because, in spite of the Disability Discrimination Act, accessible working conditions are still lacking in both large and small companies.

There are a number of organisations which can offer information. The Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) at the job centre or the nearest Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) might be your first port of call. They will be able to tell you about local and Government support schemes.

The Government's New Deal for people aged 16-24 on Jobseekers Allowance, which begins next April (DN, November), will provide training and advice for people who want to set up their own business. People with disabilities will be eligible as soon as the New Deal begins.

Before you set up a business, you will need a marketable skill or product.

One organisation which can

help is the Queen Elizabeth's Training College in Surrey. It offers residential, business and technical courses for people with disabilities, including an 11 week small business programme (SBP).

Students can learn a new skill, such as information technology, then transfer to the SBP. Previous experience is not essential but potential recruits must have a business idea, marketable skills and the will to succeed.

Linda Grant, 34, from Surrey, was a student on the SBP. She told DN: "I developed repetitive strain injury in 1992 and was sacked from my job six months later. I had quite a lot of acupuncture as part of my treatment and began training as an acupuncturist.

"I was also very ill with chronic fatigue syndrome (ME) but completed my training. However, I did not feel confident to start up my own business.

"The DEA at Kingston told me about the Queen Elizabeth's course. It covers everything you need to know to get yourself up



In touch: Guillermo Espejo

and running.

"By February this year, I had my own business with private patients. I also work in a health centre in Kent. I have much more job satisfaction now."

Business studies instructor, John Cuthbertson, said: "The course is about taking the person's skill and letting them apply it in their own way and in their own time."

Where to get money

If it is financial support that you are after, the Northern Development Company (NDC) might be able to help.

Putting you in charge

Queen Elizabeth's Training College, tel: (01372) 842204. Northern Development Company, tel: 0191-261 0026. Blind Business Association, tel: 0181-427 3052. RNIB Self Employment Development Unit, tel: (01737) 768935. Prince's Youth Business Trust, tel: 0171-543 7411. RADAR has a guide book on self employment, £1.50 (inc. p&p), tel: 0171-250 3222.

Aztec and 4D Business Solutions of Wimbledon give free training and advice on self employment to disabled people in the Kingston, Merton and Wandsworth areas of London, tel: 0181-944 1921.

The Northern Pinetree Trust offers business counselling and training to disabled people in the North East who are already in business or wanting to start up, tel: 0191-492 0022.



Crash course: students learning vehicle valeting at Queen Elizabeth's College in Leatherhead

Do it yourself

NDC has recently set up the Spirit of Enterprise Revolving Loan Fund, which offers disabled people who live in the north of England the opportunity to apply for a loan of up to £5,000 towards their own business.

Loans can be used for any aspect of the business such as promotion or training and should be repaid over five years.

Corporate affairs director of NDC, Phil Shakeshaft, said: "We will see what the demand is like, but in the future we would like to see this scheme operating nationally."

People with visual impairments can get advice and small grants from the Blind Business Association (BBA), a self help group which encourages blind or visually impaired people to set up their own business if they have had difficulties getting work with an employer.

All 108 members use their contacts in the business world to network for jobs for each other.

The RNIB's self employment development unit (SEDU) supplies information on funding, business training and support systems within the RNIB and elsewhere.

Guillermo Espejo, 54, from Sutton, works from home, translating business documents from English to Spanish or vice versa, using a Braille display machine.

He told DN: "One of the staff at the SEDU put together a list of potential clients for me because I had no idea how to sell my translation services.

"Having made contact with several agencies, I then got in

touch with the Employment Service and got help with buying equipment through Access to Work. Most of my clients don't know that I am blind. They just buy the service and I sell it."

The Prince's Youth Business Trust's (PYBT) Boost Project targets young disabled people who want to set up their own business.

Spike Breakwell, 29, is a comic writer and performer from Bedfordshire who has

muscular dystrophy. Spike approached the PYBT in 1992 for financial help.

He said: "PYBT loaned me the money to go through part of my apprenticeship as a stand up comic, to do free open spots at venues around London and live and get about.

"Without that I would still be working in computers. Now I am writing sitcoms for radio and TV, acting, doing stand-up comedy every week and writing a book. I'm in vogue."

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DN 12/97

The dream of Manchester

Helen Gregory finds one northern town turning its ideas into action

Manchester has one ambition: to become the most accessible city in Europe.

The council is determined to make the city – one of the north's most trendy and well-known, boasting a Chinatown and Gay and Lesbian Village – even more welcoming to tourists, as well as its residents. So how's it doing so far?

Getting there

Manchester has the most motorways running into it in the country, so drivers are spoilt for choice – the M56, M62, M66, M61 and M6 all lead to the city.

You can fly in, using the nearby airport, tel: 0161-489 3000, and the airport railink runs to the central Piccadilly Railway Station all day and night, tel: (0345) 484950.

Most trains go into Piccadilly or Victoria stations, tel: (0345) 881881.

Out and About

The Granada Studios Tour is

the city's most famous attraction where you can tour behind the tv screens and walk down Coronation Street. It is fully wheelchair accessible and the organisers reckon you need about five hours to see everything, tel: 0161-833 0880.

The Museum of Science and Industry, tel: 0161-832 1830, is a more serious, but entertaining choice.

The city's university houses the Whitworth Art Gallery, with one of the most internationally famous collections of British watercolours and prints, tel: 0161-275 7450.

Shopping

The main chain stores are concentrated in and around Market Street and the Arndale Centre, where there is a Shopmobility, tel: 0161-839 4060. King Street and St Ann's Square have fashion stores and trendy bargain shops can be found in the Northern Quarter and in the Coliseum Centre.

Entertainment

Manchester claims to have more theatres than any other provincial city – unfortunately, few are totally accessible although some venues have



Role model: the town hall has great access

MANCHESTER TOURIST BOARD

plans to improve. The Royal Exchange Theatre, tel: 0161-833 9833, can provide programmes in large print and braille (See special offers, page 31).

The Nynex Arena, tel: 0161-930 8000, is particularly good for music concerts and the Bridgewater Hall, home to the Hallé Orchestra, tel: 0161-907 9000, has six wheelchair spaces with adjoining spaces for carers/partners.

Accommodation

If you fancy splashing out on a

stay, the four-star Ramada Hotel, tel: 0161-835 2555, has two wheelchair accessible rooms.

On the cheaper side, the Dolby Hotel, tel: 0161-907



The accessible Metrolink

2277, has three wheelchair-accessible rooms and the city centre youth hostel has two four-bed dormitories which can take wheelchairs, tel: 0161-839 9960.

Eating and drinking

The continental-style Barça, tel: 0161-839 7099, is fully accessible, as is the more British and traditional Harry Ramsden's fish and chip restaurant, tel: 0161-832 9144, and the Italian Cocotoo, tel: 0161-237 5458.

The trendy new Mash and Air has its own microbrewery, tel: 0161-661 6161, while the Library Theatre Coffee Bar, tel: 0161-234 1942, does snacks and has a licensed bar during performances.

Getting around

Orange badge holders get free parking in the city's pay and display car parks and there are a few reserved spaces in each multi-storey car park. But on-street parking is very limited, and the council is still dealing with the aftermath of last year's IRA bomb.

Few buses are accessible (try the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive for details, tel: 0161-228 7811), but Manchester residents can use the Ring and Ride services to book a journey, tel: 0171-273 3131. The Metrolink tram system which runs through the city from Bury to Altrincham, tel: 0161-205 2000, is a traveller's dream – with no barriers.

All the city's 600 black cabs must be accessible to wheelchair users. Try Taxifone, tel: 0161-236 9974, and Mantax, tel: 0161-236 5133.



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College on course

The University of Manchester, tel: 0161-275 2000, prides itself on being flexible and adapting to disabled students' needs.

About 2.5 per cent of the student population is disabled (487 people) and most wheelchair users stay in one of 40 accessible rooms in the hall of residence. Janet Argust, special needs co-ordinator, says no one has been turned away. "We will adapt more rooms if we need to."

Ms Argust says the university is very accommodating when students have special requirements. "Access isn't perfect, but all the main buildings are wheelchair accessible. If a student has a problem getting to a lecture, we will move it to a different room."

The university also has a reading machine for blind students and a team of community service volunteers who can assist students.



Thelma Tomlinson and Lorraine Gradwell of GMCDP

Saying it louder

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People is one of the strongest and most vociferous groups of disabled people in the country.

Aiming to promote the integration and independence of disabled people, it runs a Disability Action Training Project which claims to be the largest disability issues training agency in the North West, run by disabled people.

The coalition also runs an information service, tel: 0161-273 5155 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, from 1.30-4.30pm.

Young people are an important part of the group and get the chance to air their views at the Young Disabled People's Forum, tel: 0161-273 8141, which the coalition set up to assist disabled people between 15 and 25 to take more control over their lives.

It organises role models to talk with the group, provides information and teaches independent living skills.

Co-chair, Lorraine Gradwell, says the group has become more powerful since it was set up 13 years ago, with people consulting the coalition on planning and equal opportunities issues.

She says: "We have been an influential organisation because we are very principled and consistent. We have earned credibility and respect and our training work extends that."

The coalition is now working on a review to decide where it should concentrate its energies in the future.

City bids to be the best



Neville Strowger

As the city gears itself towards hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2002, the council, along with disability groups and private businesses, is working to make the city the most accessible in Europe.

Many shops around the city centre are already wheelchair accessible, all pedestrian crossings are tactile, and the town hall is a model of good practice.

The council will not approve any public housing development unless it is accessible, and also insists that private housing companies

make their buildings "visible".

Access officer Neville Strowger has been instrumental in improving conditions

around the city, including persuading hotels to open their doors and improving the streets. He reckons there are now 11,000 drop kerbs in the city. He says: "The IRA bomb last year was a godsend in a way as it meant developers have looked at

access issues – it has meant a new start."

Councillor Martin Pagel is lead member on disabled people's issues and is convinced that the city's European ambition is achievable.

The council also has cash set aside to create individual routes for Manchester residents, where personal needs are taken into account in moving pavement obstacles – trees, for example.

It is also setting up a Disabled People's Employment Centre to get more of the city's 45,000 disabled people into work. One of its aims will be to help

people set up in co-operatives. "As long as it works out a penny cheaper than keeping people in day care, then we are committed to it."

But Cllr Pagel says disabled people in the city do not make enough demands.

"I want them to get angry and give me a hard time. If there are the resources, we take people's aspirations and turn them into action plans."



Martin Pagel



Good work

Visually impaired people wanting a career move can use a new careers service run by Henshaw's Society for the Blind.

Its Greater Manchester Regional Resource Centre gives computer training and advice on interviews, job applications and confidence building.

Co-ordinator, John Perry, says there is a low percentage of visually impaired workers in the area. "Employers don't realise their potential and this centre aims to change that."

Tel: 0161-872 1234.

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Supporters united

Manchester United Football Club's Disabled Supporters Association has so many requests for spaces it has to turn down dozens of fans each week.

The club already has 70 wheelchair spaces at Old Trafford, as well as spaces for carers and seven visiting supporters. It also has 20 double seats for visually impaired fans, with a

commentary facility.

But the association now has 600 members, and 250 of them want places each week.

Secretary, Phil Downs, allocates the seats and says: "Obviously we would like more, but unlike other clubs which stick wheelchairs at the front in all weathers, United has incorporated our seats into the stands."



Your stars

By DN's astrologer Marion Stanton



SAGITARIUS (23 Nov-21 Dec)

★ The full moon in your opposite sign on the 14th could goad you into action. Take the right course for your own development. You need to concentrate on activities which give you personal insight as well as lending a hand to others. Make Christmas a meditative time.

CAPRICORN (22 Dec-20 Jan)

★ You are full of energy and raring to go in the first half of December. You'd better plan a quiet Christmas after all this activity. You might clinch a business deal or finally capture the passion you have been yearning for. Either way, you could be left reeling, so relax until the new year.

AQUARIUS (21 Jan-19 Feb)

★ There is a possibility that the mistletoe was put up for you this Christmas. Venus and Mars are both active in your sign and both are dying for action. For available Aquarians this could be the time to catch some fish.

PISCES (20 Feb-20 March)

★ Inspired, as always, by Christmas cheer, you could find yourself trying to set up opportunities for everyone, but if you're not careful you could leave yourself out. Look after yourself this month and don't let your tongue run away with you at the parties.

ARIES (21 Mar-20 Apr)

★ The month starts out with tensions mounting between you and a colleague. Try not to worry or to buy into another's problems. You should be free of the strife by mid-month and be able to enjoy the season of goodwill.

TAURUS (21 Apr-21 May)

★ You could be called upon to put in a lot of effort to make Christmas a success. There are likely to be some sparks flying around and you should try and make sure you're not the one to light them.

GEMINI (22 May-22 June)

★ The full moon hits your sign on the 14th and could cause trouble as you begin to wonder if you have your priorities right for the festive season. This is probably not the best time to start examining self-doubts. Enjoy Christmas and leave self-examination to the New Year.

CANCER (23 June-23 July)

★ Arguments are likely in the first half of December. There could be battles between you and your partner about who should be responsible for what. You'd do yourself a favour if you decide what you are prepared to do and then face the situation calmly.

LEO (24 July-23 Aug)

★ Is it a spark of romance, a passionate fling or a fit of anger this Christmas? Anything is possible for impulsive Leos, with Mars and Venus in opposition. Just enjoy a Christmas that promises to be anything but quiet.

VIRGO (24 Aug- 23 Sept)

★ Ok Virgos, are you going to martyr yourself to friends and family for another Christmas, or will you break

from tradition and do your own thing? If you decide to stay with the usual routine, try to spice things up by letting yourself get a bit of the action too.

LIBRA (24 Sept-23 Oct)

★ December begins by promising all sorts of problems in affairs of the heart. Thankfully, these should begin to iron out before Christmas. You might even find that you find a solution to an old problem that has been bugging you.

SCORPIO (24 Oct-22 Nov)

★ Sort out any arguments in the first half of December about where you will be spending Christmas, and then let yourself have a great time getting ready for the event. What you do might not suit everyone, but why not suit yourself for once?

PICTURE PUZZLE

See if you can recognise the following people who appeared in DN this year. Answers on page 27.



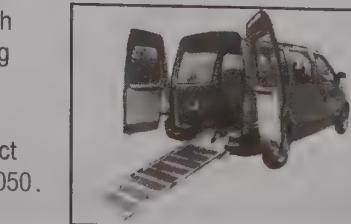
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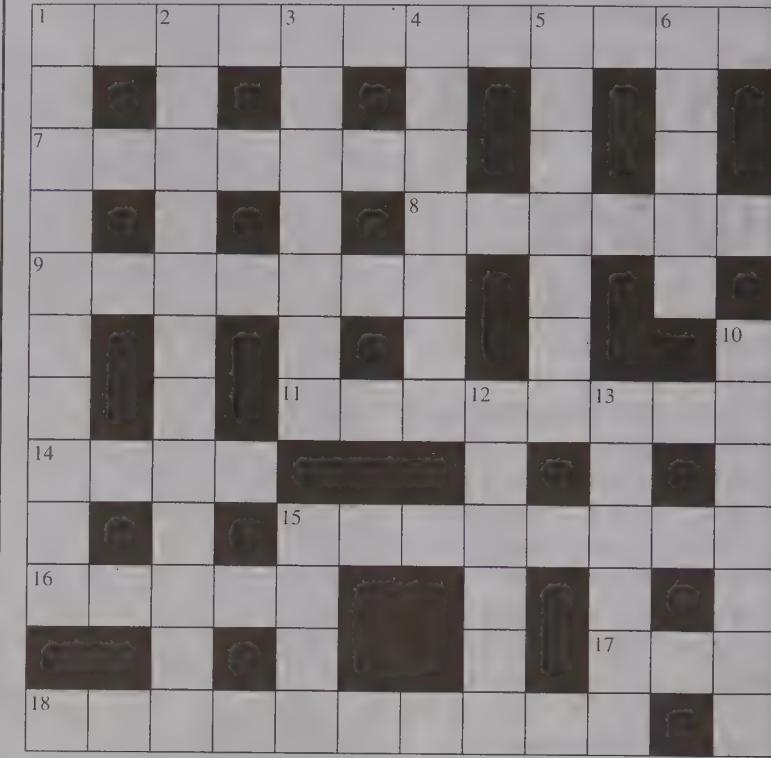
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DN's crossword

Answers on page 27

COMPILED BY REBECCA REYNOLDS



ACROSS

1. Note pays sail (anag)
7. Of great athletic ability (7)
8. Hairy part of the body (6)
9. From a remote Indian country (7)
11. Got share (anag)
14. Words and music (4)
15. Medicinal salve (8)
16. Reject (5)
17. Consume (3)
18. Domestic pet (10)

DOWN

1. Artificial limb extension (10)
2. Vegetarian cooking ingredient (4,4,4)
3. Momentum (7)
4. Absolutely not! (US) (2,3,2)
5. Brass instrument (7)
6. Dead language (5)
10. Get seat (anag)
12. Evaluation (7)
13. Like it always is (2,4)
15. Unrepeated (4)

BATH SALTS AND BUDGIES

Who buys bath salts these days? Or those strange crumbling blocks of mildly scented brick that are more tempting as a festive nibble than anything else. Maybe I'd be better off eating them than trying to use them in the shower. Yes – the shower.

Which begs the question, why do relatives insist on buying me piles of the quaint little beggars for Christmas when I don't even have a bath? I know exfoliation is all the rage, but there are limits on what a girl will rub over her skin...

I'm not a spoilsport, truly. It's not that my spiritual leanings aren't Christian either (yes, that is connected to Christmas, people) – most religions celebrate "mid-winter" in some way or another.

It should be remembered that before the Victorians brought along all that sentiment, Yuletide was as feisty and rollicking an excuse for a booze up as you can imagine.

Did Charles Dickens intend Tiny Tim to be inflicted on us in quite the way that he is today? All those endless movie regurgitations of *A Christmas*

Carol, where he's the poor little cripple who's so bloody happy. I just want to slap his threadbare flap-cap.

And Christmas shopping is hard enough without a family whinge on what to get Uncle Bill's spoilt budgie, Polly. She is part of the family, nag, nag, nag.

Yet I still can't escape the dread of bath salts, although there is hope. Polly can have the bath salts; they look a bit like bird seed. She'd probably enjoy gnawing at a bath cube seeing as she'll stick her beak into anything. One Christmas this included my wrist splint, which cheered me up as I sat glazed, looking at the pathetic carcass of her much bigger, but quickly devoured, brethren on the table.

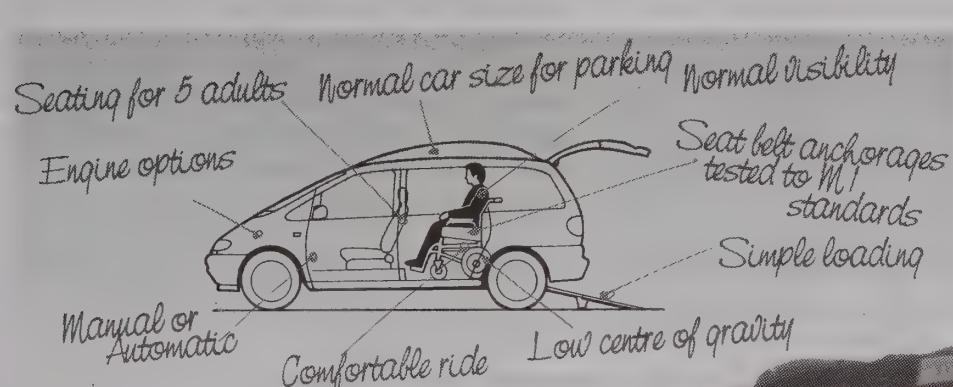
So I'm cynical. What do you expect when in boredom I may idly create a festive scene, effected origami style by four packs of naff handkerchiefs and two pairs of tan-tone tights?

Oh, but there's always that mistletoe thing to amuse me, even if tasty male tottie is thin on the ground when you need it. Yet do I really want to snog slobby Uncle Bill, or even Polly?

Penny Boot

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Nissan Cargo '60'	60"
Volkswagen Caravelle 'Tall Boy'	59"

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Dear Ann

Send your letters to: Ann Darnbrough, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

I'm home sick

I am disabled and long-term sick. I am writing to enquire if you know of any organisation that gives grants to people like me who cannot do their own house decorating?

Kirsty, Edinburgh

There are no easy answers. However, there is an organisation called Care and Repair, a co-ordinating body for 250 home improvement agencies.

While these agencies do not provide grants, they will give advice on those which may be available to you and will help people who are disabled, elderly, or on a low income, through the entire process of decision making and the actual work. They will also handle applications and paperwork on behalf of disabled clients and will check that work is up to standard. Contact them to find details of your nearest agency.

I need a lift

I have a problem transferring from wheelchair to bed and vice versa. I have always used what some people call a hammock lift because I cannot use

a hoist or sliding board as these cause injury to my shoulders.

I have made numerous enquiries through occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and nursing staff, but to no avail. I am sure I am not the only disabled person to come across this problem and I would like to hear from anybody who has similar difficulties.

Lezlee, Lancashire

I am sorry to hear you have had such difficulties in tracking down suitable equipment. I suggest you contact the Disabled Living Foundation which now has a helpline.

Spring in my step

British Summer Time has ended. Do any other readers agree with me that it would be better if it never began, or it began later?

In the Spring, we put our clocks forward. While some may gain by this, I think it has serious disadvantages if you are in poor health and/or elderly. I normally rise at 8am but because the 'real time' is 7am, it is so much colder. I feel

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

A UNIQUE SERVICE!

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick can give disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and fully accredited Methodist local preacher. Talk to her on (01787) 882111 on Thursday afternoons, 1pm-5pm and Mondays 6pm-10pm.



have any rights in Denmark. They, including you, should all go home."

I assure you this attitude is not at all uncommon and I have been told many more scare stories about others who have suffered in this way. I get no help or consideration here and I am not even allowed to drive my car despite having an appropriate licence for driving in European countries.

I don't write this to say that we Brits have got it right in the UK – we clearly haven't – but simply to point out things are not as wonderful as they are painted on the other side of the water.

David, Denmark

I am shocked at the descriptions of your life in Denmark which you tell me is so seriously damaged by prejudice and bureaucracy.

I would be interested to hear from other readers about their experiences (good or bad) of living with a disability in another European country. After all, I know that DN is read far and wide.

A reader asked me a few months ago whether she was the only person with hereditary multiple exostoses and, if not, how she could get in touch with others having the condition.

A support group has been formed. Contact Christopher Clarke, 6 Durham Road, Edmonton, London N9 9ED, tel: 0181-245 0314; and Dawn Searle, 60 Stevenage Road, Walkern, Hertfordshire SG2 7NE, tel: (01438) 861473.

Disabled Living Foundation, 380-4 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU, tel: 0870 603 9177, 0870 603 9176 (Minicom) Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

Care and Repair, Scotland: 553 Shields Road, Glasgow G41 2RW, tel: 01410-422 1112; England: Castle House, Kirtley Drive, Nottingham NG7 1LD, tel: 0115-979 9091; Wales: Norbury House, Norbury Road, Cardiff CF5 3AS, tel: (01222) 576286; Northern Ireland: Staying Put, Fold Housing Trust, 3-6 Redburn Square, Holywood, County Down BT18 9HZ, tel: (01232) 428314.

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Help

A look back over 1997

I am a student researching services for parents who have physical and/or learning disabilities. I'd like to hear from carers of parents who are disabled and disabled groups. Can anyone direct me to associated literature? I'll reimburse postage. Andrea Mitchell-Connon, 19 Countess Avenue, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3PN.

I am a deaf physiotherapy student undertaking a project on the experiences of physiotherapists who are deaf or blind, the difficulties they face and their strategies to overcome them. Can you help with my questionnaire? Large print and braille available. Katie Hardman, 44/1 Coales Hall, Bishops Rise, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9BT.

Rollers, the arts theatre group are looking for new members. We are made up of disabled and non-disabled artists and use drama, music and poetry in performances. A tour is due in spring 1998 and there's a new show to premier in December. Tel: (01543) 468177, e-mail: roll@dworld.force9.co.uk.

Can anyone help a disabled man stuck with a prohibitive mortgage? I want to build a purpose-built bungalow and need someone to provide short-term loan/mortgage. Possibly build two, and loan provider keeps/sells one as repayment. If you can help call Marcus, tel: (01484) 642038.

Snowdon award holders, can you help? Have you received information about an important research project? Highlighting financial obstacles of disabled people in higher/further education, it's aimed at government, colleges and organisations. We would like your opinions. Emma Stone or Colin Barnes, tel: 0113-2334424.

Video top five

1. **DONNIE BRASCO** (E.V.): FBI agent infiltrating the Mafia. (N)

2. **SPACE JAM** (Warner): Bugs Bunny plays basketball.

3. **FEVER PITCH** (FILM 4): Film of Nick Hornby's football-mad novel.

4. **THE SAINT** (CIC): Based on the 60's tv series.

5. **ROMEO AND JULIET** (Fox Pathe): Shakespeare with hard-hitting 90's edge.

Chart supplied by MIRB. Closed captions- video includes pre-recorded word-for-word captions (N) No captions



January
News: DDA debate. Criticism of special schools. Spotlight on cp assessments.

Features: Care for elderly/disabled people investigation. Holidays to Italy and Siberia.



February
News: Rising poverty amongst disabled people. Incapacity benefit under spotlight.

Features: Andrew Healey discusses self-employment. Which?/Rica report on washing machines. Europe by train.



March
News: Two child carers win legal battles. Wheelchair voucher scheme slammed.

Features: Election special. Parent's voice calling for Ministry for Disabled People.

For sale

FIAT FIORINO, N REG. 1.7 diesel, metallic blue, only 3,500 miles. Rear ramp access for wheelchair. Seats 4 people plus one wheelchair, £9,500 ono. Tel: 0181-995 5229 (after 5.00pm, west London).

LARK 4 ELECTRIC scooter. Used twice, still under guarantee. Battery charger, lights etc. Cost £2,400, accept £1,750 ono. Tel: 0181-311 1917.

SILVER LEADER 4 scooter. One year old, excellent condition. Includes baskets and charger. Cost £2,650, accept £1,500. Tel: (01784) 252885 (Ashford, Middx).

TALBOT EXPRESS TAIL lift van. Accommodates 3 wheelchairs plus 3 seated passengers. Good views from the inside. Very good condition. 5 years old, 45,000 miles approx. £5,000 ono. James Elliott, tel: (01922) 494165.

SUNRISE MEDICAL POWERTEC 40 electric chair. New July '96. Kerbclimb dual control. 18in seat width, battery charger. £2,500 ono. Tel: (01909) 773606.

CHILD'S ADAPTED 3-WHEEL bike. Suit child with cp aged 5-10. Pedal straps, leg supports, trunk support, hip and chest straps. Easy pedalling, guide handle. £300 ono. Tel: 0161-336 7914.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS
ACROSS: 1. Passionately
7. Olympic 8. Armpit
9. Tibetan 11. Shortage
14. Song 15. Ointment
16. Spurn 17. Eat
18. Budgerigar
DOWN: 1. Prosthesis
2. Soya bean curd 3. Impetus
4. No can do 5. Trumpet
6. Latin 10. Gestate
12. Rating 13. As ever 15. Once

PICTURE ANSWERS
1. James Strachan 2. Andrew Smith 3. David Blunkett
4. Marigold Hope 5. Chris Moon 6. Paul Boteng



April
News: Gloucester County Council wins appeal. Government admits NHS crisis. Problems with direct payments for community care.

Features: Interview with Chris Moon. Ideal Home Exhibition. Gardening special.



May
News: Housing laws make disabled people homeless. Pensioners paying for care. Fears of medical testing on disabled people.

Features: Independent Living Design Awards. Employment options for school leavers.



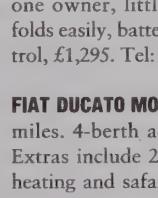
June
News: Thalidomide shock discovery. Media portrayal of disability increasingly out of focus.

Features: Incontinence special



July
News: Government tracking down DLA fraudsters. Government changes to Access to Work.

Features: Get a foot in the job market door. Mobility Roadshow preview.



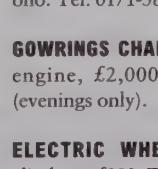
August
News: First employment case win under DDA. Cannabis campaign launched.

Government U-turn on housing benefit cuts.

Features: Profile of Andrew Smith. City focus on Brighton.



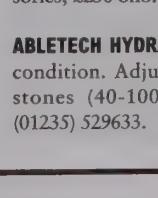
September
News: The variable cost of being disabled. Motability sets up customer charter. Radio 4 programming shake-up.



RENAULT EXTRA FREEDOM Atlas conversion. Five seater and wheelchair. Suspension lowered electrically. Short automatic ramp. Registered March 1991, white, 11,700 miles, £4,500. Photos available. Tel: 0151-644 8311 (Merseyside, Wirral).



FORD ESCORT CHAIRMAN, bought 1989. Professional conversion by Gowring. Wheelchair access at rear, securing system. 33,000 miles, MOT, good working order, £4,950. Tel: (01962) 776700 (evenings) (0468) 455434 (day).



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TRAVELARK 3-WHEEL SCOOTER. Red vinyl covered. Dismantles to fit car boot. Vgc, £500. Tel: (01939) 200282.

FORD ESCORT ELITE. 1996, N reg, diesel. Wheelchair carrier plus four seater. Conversion by Gowerings, with hydraulic rear entrance platform. Maroon in colour and in immaculate condition with low mileage. This is an 'as new' vehicle with genuine reason for sale by lady owner. £1,350 ono. Tel: (01454) 862864.

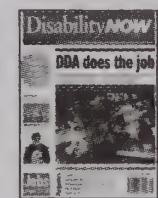
ELAP ROTATING CAR seat. Fits Citroën BX, £125. Also new easy chair-riser, £100. Adjustamatic single bed, £450, used once due to bereavement. Bath

feature. Couple talk about adoption. Summer fashion.



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Features: Get a foot in the job market door. Mobility Roadshow preview.



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Back issues cost £1. Send an A4 SAE to DN (address on page 2), stating the issue. If it's no longer available we will send a photocopy.

Features: Disability in Prague. Direct payments give independence. School fashion.



October
News: Princess Diana tribute. Welsh and Scots say yes to devolution. Cannabis debate continues. 40 years of Phab.

Features: Final part of pain series. My favourite walk. Gulf farm employing men with learning difficulties.



November
News: Government presses for full civil rights. Increasing gap in wealth of elderly. Disabled woman banned from adopting.

Features: A "yes" vote for DN's cannabis survey. Party conference coverage.

bubble, lowers and raises you out of a bath, £150. Tel: (01706) 814951 or (01706) 665935.

FIAT FIORINO N REG. (1996). 1700 diesel engine, 16,000 miles. Rear ramped access, four point wheelchair tie down, safety belt, two front facing rear seats. Excellent condition, £7,500. Tel: (01622) 686375.

RESTAMATIC BED FOR sale. Adjustable and vibrates, £900 ono. Lift and rise chair, electric and reclining, £650 ono. Both almost new. Tel: 0151-653 5320 (Sherborne).

GOWRINGS CHAIRMAN ESCORT, H reg, 52,000 miles, drop back, £5,000 ono. Tel: (01625) 878644 (Macclesfield).

FIAT FIORINO, N REG. 1.7 diesel, metallic blue, only 3,500 miles. Rear ramp access for wheelchair. Seats 4 people plus one wheelchair, £9,500 ono. Tel: 0181-995 5229 (after 5pm, west London).

LARK 4302 POWERCHAIR. Excellent condition but needs new batteries. For quick sale only £150. Tel: (01727) 862462 (St Albans, Herts).

POYNTINGS RENAULT EXTRA. 1.4 petrol, G reg. Ramp access, bench rear seat. Cassette radio. Superb forward visibility for wheelchair passenger. £4,500 or offers. Tel: (01703) 253998 (Southampton).

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NISSAN SERENA CHAIRMAN. N reg, 2.3 diesel, 1,200 miles. Easy access, Ricon rear entry electric lift. 2 wheelchairs or 1 passenger and 1 wheelchair at rear. Vgc, £12,250. Tel: (01223) 882088 (Cambs).

TRANSIT AUTO F REG. 49,000 miles, joystick steering. Drive from the wheelchair, remote door and lift. £6,250. Tel: 0181-591 8540.

Continued on page 28

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TRIMCHAIR WHEELCHAIR GYM. Exercises all parts of the body safely. Converts to basic wheelchair, ideal for fitness. Good condition. £600 ono. Tel: (01908) 502019.

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NISSAN VANETTE DIESEL. 1952cc, 1990, 12 months MOT, vgc, low mileage, electric lift. Accommodates one wheelchair passenger plus seating for four additional passengers. Two sunroofs and alarm. £4,500 ono. Tel: (01924) 403421.

LARK SCOOTER MODEL 4351. good condition. 4mph, 14 miles between charging. Batteries and charger in price. Rear wheel drive, reverse gear, swivel seat, basket. £2,000 new, accept £800 ono. Tel: (01252) 842664.

CHILD'S COLT TRIKE. Includes belts and supports. Like new, £300. Child's Pony II battery powered vehicle. Many extras, excellent condition, £750. Tel: (01929) 553585.

EVERAIDS TURBO ELECTRIC wheelchair. RX7 model with tilting elevator. Vgc with spare batteries, £350 ono. Tel: (01203) 362256 (Coventry).

NISSAN PRARIE 1987 E reg. Fitted passenger wheelchair with electric lift. Will take three other passengers. Two owners from new. £5,500. Tel: (01371) 820948.

ORTHO-KINETICS LARK 4-plus scooter and battery charger. New February '77 costing £2,345. Used at most 12 times, £1,800 ono. Tel: 0181-346 3481.

HBC 200 JUNIOR 200kg wheelchair lift for fitting vehicles up to 800mm floor height. Little used. New cost £2,300. Offers. Tel: (01832) 293374 or Fax: (01832) 293375.

MANUAL SHADOW WHEELCHAIR with transforma seat. Hydraulic tilt lift. Excellent condition. Cost £1,600, accept £695. For details, tel: 0181-651 5623.

CHILD'S SUNRISE MEDICAL Suntec wheelchair. 12in seat, easy to fold. Cost £750, accept £175. Wanted: lightweight folding buggy for small disabled child. Tel: (01672) 512576 (Wiltshire).

SUNTEC TL MANUAL WHEELCHAIR. 18 months old, unused, excellent condition. Folds back, extended handles. Cost £680, will accept £300 ono. Buyer to collect. Tel: 0181-514 4241.

Wanted

LIGHTWEIGHT FOLDING BUGGY for small disabled child. Tel: (01672) 512576 (Wiltshire).

If you are submitting a personal advert please state whether you want us to include your home area. Unless this is written **DN** will not be able to disclose this personal information to any queries.

For personal ads please send a cheque or postal order for £5 payable to **Disability Now** with your ad. This is to help cover our costs.

To reply to a personal ad indicate the Box Number and mark the envelope Private and Confidential. If you do not it will be opened. Send to **DN**, address on page 2.

Accommodation

ACCESSIBLE LODGINGS OR rented/shared accommodation required immediately for 3 months by young female BBC employee wheelchair user, in west, north or southwest London. Tel: 0117-985 7007.

Personal

FRIENDLY FEMALE 49, single, slight facial disfigurement camouflaged. Seeks mature, intelligent, sensitive male friends to share interests and maybe meet occasionally for outings, travel, walks and talks. Penpals able bodied or disabled welcome. Box No. 139

35 YEAR OLD Hydrocephalic male, seeks male penfriend aged 20 to 35 with mild disability who plays football for a pub team. Box No. 140

INDEPENDENT, INTELLIGENT AND thoughtful lady (45), 5ft 9in tall, n/s, with neck disability. Loves driving, having fun, outings and a good laugh (positive thinking), with a wide interest in cultural subjects. Would love to hear from/meet a happy, supportive and gentle male, n/s, over 5ft 9in, with similar qualities and interests in Edinburgh and surrounding area. Also female friends for various outings and genuine, supportive friendships. Photo appreciated. Box No. 141

MY NAME IS JOHN, aged 63 and my hobbies are reading and music, from classical to the Spice Girls. I like going for a drink and a meal. I also like playing chess and watching tv and videos. I am quite well educated and enjoy going visiting and shopping with help sometimes, as I have Cerebral Palsy. I would love to meet a lady friend between the ages of 35-60. I have been separated for 5 years so I would like to meet someone to enjoy life with. Box No. 142

TRAVEL WRITER AGED 45, with cp, requires attractive and fashionable lady under 40, for practical assistance and physical fulfilment, on trips in the UK and worldwide. All expenses paid for the right lady. Photograph if possible. Box No. 143

I'M 51, MALE and retired from professional job due to an accident. I wltm a female with a gsoh to share social life and interests with. I enjoy films, theatre, reading, the countryside, travel, meeting people and entertaining. Box No. 144

MALE, 33, LIVES in south of England and uses wheelchair. Enjoys voluntary work and meeting new people. Would like to meet lady in similar situation aged between 29-33 to share friendship. Photo appreciated. Box No. 145

MALE AGED 36 with cp. I have a good sense of humour, like eating out, going to the cinema and cheerful conversation. I would like to meet a female with a gsoh, able bodied/disabled. Age not important. Huddersfield area. Box No. 146

AD FROM THE HEART. Male, 39, has lived somewhat isolated and lonely existence, due to periods of agoraphobia and lack of confidence. Feels left out of life. Wishes to correspond/meet an understanding female friend who is disabled. Maybe the future will be good. I live in London. Box No. 147

I AM A 38 year old male living in London. I have learning difficulties and am overweight. I am looking for a permanent relationship with a female, disabled or non-disabled, aged 30+. Ideally you will be outgoing, caring and loving, with no dependent children, living in the London/southeast area. Please write and I will reply. Box No. 148

INTELLIGENT 43 YEAR old male with muscular dystrophy wishes to meet young lady, aged 30-50, able bodied or disabled, for friendship/relationship. If possible, a car driver like myself. My interests include home life, gardening, DIY, music, reading and driving. Prefer someone around southeast area. Box No. 149

TO BE BALD is a disability. I can't find a

lady to go out with because I am bald. I am single, aged 47 and from Cardiff. I dress smartly, but modern. I am very good looking but bald. I have given up on romance, so a friend would be nice – any lady, any age. Please write. Box No. 150

To place a box classified advertisement in **DN**, please contact Richard Gresham at Kingslea Press Ltd, 12 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road, London SE16 2XU, or telephone 0171-252 1362 (Fax 0171-237 8019).

As from 6 December 1997, Scope's headquarters will be changing. The new address will be Scope, 5 Market Road, London N7. The telephone number has yet to be arranged. All post and calls to our present offices will be diverted.

DN is on the web. Visit our site at <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk> or you can e-mail us with ideas on editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Holidays

WINGED FELLOWSHIP TOURS

Overseas holidays for people with disabilities. Holland, Eire, Channel Islands, France, Switz, Norway, Czech, Majorca, USA etc. Prices include flights, travel in adapted vehicles, accessible accommodation, nurse/couriers. Also UK budget 'Discovery' holidays. All destinations accessible. Brochure from Gary Day: 0171 833 4579 ext 122.

A WIDE SELECTION OF LUXURY ADAPTED COACH TOURS FOR 1998



Paris Disney - Jan., Feb., & June
Lake District - March
Ireland - May
Austria - October

STILL AVAILABLE XMAS & NEW YEAR BREAKS

call Tony or Josie on:
01708 863198

or write to:

1 Tank Hill Road, Purfleet, Essex RM16 1SX

NOW BOOKING FOR 1998

SUMMER HOLIDAY SPECIALS FOR THE DISABLED

DESTINATIONS THROUGHOUT THE U.K. PLUS

TURKEY - CYPRUS
PORTUGAL - SPAIN
TENERIFE - LANZAROTE
MALTA - FLORIDA

PLUS LOTS MORE

call Tony or Josie on:
01708 863198

or write to:

1 Tank Hill Road, Purfleet, Essex RM16 1SX

SEND US YOUR SMALLS! ...and make a big impression.

Due to lack of space in this issue, **DN** is unable to include our classified advertisement form. If you want to advertise, please use the form on the left. Send it with a cheque for the total to **Disability Now**, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Have Fun, Fun, Fun!

"Skylarks" – Nottingham
Purpose-built holiday centre re-opens in August after £1.6m refurbishment. 26 single en-suite, 5 twin rooms. Electric hoists, CTV. Hydro pool. Bar. Help buttons. Free trips/excursions. Nurses/volunteer support. Prices from £245 pw – including food/care. For brochure, please tel: 0171 833 4579 ext 132.

LLTEY MIERI

LLANDEILO, WEST WALES
3 charming award-winning cottages, designed for wheelchair users and their families. Peaceful rural location overlooked by Dinefwr Castle. Each warm and well equipped cottage sleeps 4. Extensive grounds and games room. Open all year. Short breaks available. Tel: Catherine McLoughlin (01558 823 059) for brochure.

Brittany Cottage to let. Fully adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details **C. Hodgson**. Tel (01924) 454300.

PENROSE BURDEN NORTH CORNWALL "Holiday Care Award Winners"

Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service. Please ring or write for colour brochure.

R&N Hall, Penrose Burden, St Beward, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4LZ. Telephone Bodmin (01208) 850277 or 850617

"Hacienda-el-Miguel" the Costa Blanca Disabled Holiday Apartment for up to 6. Suitable for 4 adults plus 2 children (max). Ring or write soon to avoid disappointment. Mick Benford, Holiben, 23 West Way, Kettering NN15 7LE. Tel: (01536) 523591.

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BOWBRIDGE ROAD, NEWARK, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

AGES 55+

2 BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR FLAT IN SHELTERED COMPLEX

TEL: DAVID SHEPHERD 0116 2774429

For sale (continued on p29)

THE WHEELCHAIR WAREHOUSE

GBL

THE LARGEST CHOICE

IN THE UK FOR

Manual Chairs - Power chairs - Scooters -

Sports wheelchairs

THE ONE STOP SHOPPING

SOURCE

Run by disabled people for disabled people

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All makes - Impartial advice given

Home visits available - Free trials

All guarantees honoured

Reasonable rates

MOTABILITY

FINANCE AVAILABLE

The masters of mobility

0181 569 8955

Units 1-4,
Shield Drive, Brentford,
Middlesex TW8 9EX

Recruitment (continued on page 30)

RAILTRACK

Enable more people with disabilities to travel by rail.

London

Railtrack owns Britain's rail infrastructure - the tracks, signals, tunnels and stations - and is responsible for the timetabling, signalling, maintenance and renewal of the network. Over the next 10 years, we will be investing £16 billion on improving the network for everyone's benefit. And we're determined to ensure that people with disabilities gain as much as anyone.

That's why we've created this new role, for someone to champion their cause. You'll become our expert on disability issues. You'll represent the interests of people with disabilities, internally and externally, and ensure we meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. This will involve developing a training programme for our employees and contractors, and working closely with the Disabled Passenger Transport Advisory Committee, Office of the Rail Regulator, Department of Environment Transport & the Regions and other influential organisations. You'll also help our rail industry partners meet their legal obligations and solve problems hampering travellers with disabilities.

This is an opportunity to make a big difference to many people's lives.

To do so, you must appreciate the difficulties people with disabilities can encounter when travelling by rail.

You also need to be commercially astute, have negotiating, influencing and PC skills, and possess the ability to produce business cases and plans. It would also be useful if you had some understanding of building design issues.

To apply, please send full career details, quoting Ref DC, to: Stephanie Williams, Railtrack plc, DPL2, Railtrack House, Euston Square, London NW1 2EE.

The closing date for applications is 12 December 1997.

RAILTRACK IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

POLICY OFFICER EQUAL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

This is a 3-4 days a week post, subject to negotiation.

Salary £22,247 rising to £27,873 pa inc LW (pro rata).

The TUC is Britain's largest voluntary organisation, with over 70 member unions representing seven million working people from all walks of life. We campaign on concerns in the world of work. We negotiate in Europe and build links with all political parties, business and the community.

The TUC is committed to Equal Opportunities and is working towards fair representation of women, black people and disabled people at all levels of the organisation. Applications from these groups are particularly welcome for this post.

Closing date for completed applications is first post 5 December 1997. Interviews will be held on 16 December.

The TUC is an equal opportunities employer.

The TUC Equal Rights Department is seeking a policy officer to work part time on equal rights issues, with the emphasis on disabled people's employment and lesbian and gay rights.

Applicants should have a thorough knowledge of these areas, highly developed communication skills and an understanding of the role of the trade union movement in advancing the interests of people at work.

For an application pack please write to the Personnel and Training Office, TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. Telephone the recruitment line 0171 467 1340 (ansaphone). E-mail: jblay@tuc.org.uk Minicom 0171 436 9476.

Packs will be provided in braille and on tape if required. Completed forms will be accepted on tape.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To advertise your vacancies or courses please contact the Advertisement Director, Richard Gresham at Kingslea Press Ltd, 12 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road, London SE16 2XU, or telephone 0171-252 1362 (Fax 0171-237 8019)

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Expert Advice • Service & Repairs • Free Demonstrations

RING TODAY FOR INFORMATION PACK
01703 873800

M & J Mobility, Unit 37, New Forest Enterprise Centre, Rushington Business Park, Totton, Hants.



DORINCOURT CENTRE

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S FOUNDATION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Art & Craft Instructor

£14,950 - £16,500 p.a.

(According to qualifications and experience)

Full time instructor with multi-disciplinary skills required to join our thriving Arts Department. The successful candidate will have a teaching qualification (C & G 7307 min.) and an art background to HND or equivalent. Ceramics and Creative Computing experience a definite advantage.

You will also have experience of working with people with special needs and a commitment to working as part of a team.

For further details and a job description, please contact:
Seamus Cuddihy, Arts Department Manager, QEFD, Dorincourt Centre,
Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BT.
Tel: 01372 842596 ext. 286 Fax: 01372 843753

Closing date: Monday 1st December 1997



Registered Charity No. 251051
An equal opportunities employer welcoming applications
from all sections of the community

Disability alliance

educational & research association

Breaking the link between poverty and disability

We are a small national charity with over 330 member organisations. Specialists in disability benefits we provide information, advice and training, publish the Disability Rights Handbook and produce briefing and lobbying materials.

We are looking for two experienced welfare rights advisers to join a team providing advice and training on disability benefits to claimants and their advisers. You will have extensive knowledge of the social security system, experience of advising and the ability to write clearly and succinctly.

RIGHTS WORKER (Training)
(ref. RWT) permanent post

Having run successful training programmes for many years we are now looking to set up a Training Unit. You will be responsible for setting up and developing the Unit, organising our training programme and teaching on some of our courses. You will have training experience and be a good communicator.

RIGHTS WORKER (Information)
(ref. RWI) three year contract

This is a new post funded by the National Lottery Charities Board. You will be responsible for writing benefit guides, leaflets and articles for publication. You will have strong writing skills and evidence of published work.



Salary for both posts SO1/2 (30-32) starting at £20,343 (incl LW)
plus 5% pension scheme
35 hour week

Further details and application forms from: Disability Alliance, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA. Tel: 0171 247 8776 (10-4) or 0171 247 8759 (at other times). Closing date: noon 8th January 1998. You must quote the reference for the post you are interested in.

Applications from disabled people positively welcomed.

*Fully accessible non-smoking office.
Charity number 1063115/0*

For sale (continued on p30)

Powerchairs

EST 1982

MOBILITY CONSULTANTS

New and Nearly New, Electric Wheelchairs, 3 and 4 wheel Scooters, Lift/Rec Chairs, Beds, etc.

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* Walking sticks * Rainwear * Tyres * Batteries * Grab rails * Scooters * Wheelchairs * Risers * Stairlifts etc etc

Equipment bought and sold. Sales, service, hire.

D & K Mobility, 62, Hollybush Road, Gravesend, Tel: 01474 353837 Mon-Fri 10-5 Sat 10-3. Closed Thursday

5% off on all new electrical equipment until end of October

U.S. VANS FOR U.S. DOLLARS

VanFare, USA is a tetraplegic owned company specialising in new and previously owned adapted mini or full size vans for disabled driver, passenger group transport. Contact: VanFare, USA 11 School St., Essex, MA 01929 USA
Phone: 001 508 768 6228
Fax: 001 508 768 6404
Area code change 1/12/97 508-978
E-mail: vanfare@tlac.net
<http://www.tlac.net/users/vanfare>

FEDERATION OF DISABILITY SPORTS ORGANISATIONS
(Y & H)
seeks to appoint
RESOURCE OFFICER (EMPOWERMENT)

To create an environment where people with learning difficulty can become actively involved in aspects of management within the structure of the Federation.

Funding from the National Lottery Charities Board will establish a three year project which will identify and address training needs for people with learning difficulty in the process of committee working, issues around sports development and aspects of direction and management. The training needs for enablers will also be addressed.

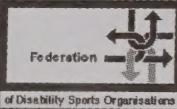
The postholder will have a relevant qualification in community work and will demonstrate an understanding and commitment to empowerment for people with learning difficulty.

The Federation is aware of its responsibility in encouraging employment prospects for disabled people. Any disabled person, able to meet the minimum criteria for the post will be granted an interview.

The salary for the post will be based on local authority scale SO1 £17,481 - £18,636 - pro rata for 21 hours per week.

Further information and application pack can be obtained from:

Tricia Hall
Federation of Disability Sports Organisations
Unit 9, Milner Way
Ossett, Wakefield WF5 9JN
Tel: (01242) 279305
Minicom: (01242) 275070
Fax: (01242) 280232



ICD works to challenge poverty and promote development through the sharing of skills, and currently has over 130 skilled professionals working in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East.

ADVISER/TRAINER
DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE, NAMIBIA

Based in Windhoek, the National Disability Resource Centre is the first of its kind in Namibia. It aims to facilitate self-advocacy and empowerment, providing information, advisory and referral services particularly with regard to training and work opportunities. The ICD worker will support the development of the centre, sharing skills with the Head of Centre and carrying out training to strengthen the skills of the Centre's staff. A key role will be to support the design, planning and implementation of programmes to meet user needs. She will have extensive knowledge of disability issues and relevant experience ideally in information, training and employment support services for and with disabled people. Needs assessment, programme development and training skills are essential. Personal experience of disability would contribute to the postholder's approach and understanding.

ICD offers a salary based on local living costs, accommodation paid, UK savings allowance of £180 per month and other benefits, 2 year contract. Details/application form from ICD, Unit 3, Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road, London N1 7BJ, tel 0171 704 1738, e-mail clifion@gn.apc.org Closing date: 8 January 1998.



ICD acts to challenge poverty and promote development and is committed to equal opportunities. ICD is a department of CII. Reg. Charity No. 294329.

AFM Consulting is the professional service division of Amey Facilities Management Ltd., which in turn is part of the highly successful Amey plc Group.

ACCESS ASSISTANT - Wembley

An Access Assistant with an architectural or surveying background to technician level is required to improve access for disabled people to the built environment.

Knowledge of disability issues, inclusive design, access audit procedures and access legislation is required. AutoCAD R12/13, Word 6, Excel and personal experience of disability are desirable.

This is initially a one year contract with an option to renew. The closing date for applications will be 10th December 1997.

Please write, enclosing a full CV and indicating current salary, to:

Miss Eimear Cantwell
AFM Consulting, Cottrell House
53-63 Wembley Hill Road
Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8BE
Tel: 0181 900 2100

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer



DN is on the web. Visit our site at <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk>, or you can e-mail us with ideas on editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Deadlines for the January issue of Disability Now:
Booking deadline is 5 December
Copy deadline is 9 December

ACTION AND RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN NEWHAM

require a Co-ordinator
for their new and exciting
Newham Independent Living Scheme

Salary: SO2.32 (£20,430pa inc.)

A resourceful and imaginative disabled person is required to develop and administer this new initiative in Newham. You will be responsible for developing all aspects of the scheme including setting up a register of disabled people using the scheme, developing an information service including a drop-in, setting up a training programme and a peer support network, liaising with statutory and voluntary organisations to develop understanding of independent living issues.

To achieve the above you will need to be fully aware of independent living issues and have a strong commitment to the empowerment of disabled people and equal opportunities. You will also need to have experience of developing and administering projects within the voluntary sector. If you are ready for a challenge and would like to help us develop this project please ring/write for an application form.

Closing date for applications: 10th December 1997

For further details and an application form please contact:

Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham
c/o Community Links
105 Barking Road
Canning Town
E16 4HQ
Tel: 0171 473 2270 (voice/minicom)
Fax: 0171 473 6671

GMCDP
The Greater Manchester
Coalition of Disabled People
is recruiting for an
INFORMATION WORKER

NJC SCALE 6, £15,759 - 21 hours per wk, £9,455 pro-rata

The successful candidate would need to be able to develop and maintain the extensive information base of GMCDP and make appropriate information available to members and outside bodies through the production of a monthly information Bulletin, direct contact and telephone or written enquiries. The post will also involve work around production of "Coalition" magazine and developing the information/publications project within the GMCDP.

Requests by phone will not be accepted, please send for information, stating if braille, tape or large print is required, to:

GMCDP, Carisbrooke, Wenlock Way, Gorton, Manchester M12 5LF.

Closing date for applications is 4pm 2nd January 1998
Interviews Wk commencing 26th January 1998

PLEASE do not send a CV

ONLY DISABLED PEOPLE NEED APPLY

CHESTERFIELD LAW CENTRE

This well established Law Centre providing free legal advice and representation to the rural and urban communities of North Derbyshire requires:

Solicitor: Expertise in housing law and experience/interest in immigration, employment and discrimination law. Opportunities to undertake group work and develop new areas of work such as environmental and community care law. Salary scale: £19,752-£21,285.

Interview date: 18.12.97

Co-ordinator (Volunteers and training): Experienced project worker required to develop an exciting new project within the Law Centre. Responsible for co-ordinating work with volunteers and developing training provision. This post is funded by the National Lottery Charities Board until December 2000. Salary scale: £15,759-£16,815.

Interview date: 17.12.97

Enthusiasm, flexibility and commitment to the aims of the Law Centre and equal opportunities are essential requirements for both posts. Post holders will join the existing staff team, working as a collective. Both posts are open to applicants wishing to job-share.

Chesterfield Law Centre is striving to be an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Information and an application form (CVs not accepted) from 44 Park Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1XZ or telephone: 01246 550674 / minicom: 01246 204570. Closing date for both posts: 8.12.97 at 12 noon.

Personal



In a Crisis

Whatever you're going through, we'll go through it with you. Please phone, visit or write

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The Samaritans is a Registered Charity providing Confidential and Emotional Support. Charity No. 219432

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Able-bodied or Disabled
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HANDIDATE
Dating Agency

A dating agency designed for people with disabilities and is open to discerning able bodied people.

Tel/Fax 01473 226950

Lonely, bored and fed up?

Why not give Handidate a try?

Handidate, The Wellington Centre,
52 Chevallier Street, Ipswich,
Suffolk IP1 2PB
Member of ABIA

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into cars...

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THE ANSWER!**

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A unique contract specially
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converted to carry wheelchair
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Substantial premium savings -
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Disability Now is not responsible
for claims made in the
advertisements it prints and all
readers are advised to check
claims with the advertisers before
relying on them.



A ROSY OFFER

Hurry - this offer closes 8 Dec!



Brighten up a relative's or friend's (or even your own!) Christmas with these beautiful roses. Thanks to the RNIB, DN has 10 to give away, worth £6.99 each.

The rose, named Perception (left), was launched at the Chelsea flower show. It grows to 120cm, and was chosen for RNIB by visually impaired people due to its fragrance and vanilla/cherry pink petals.

If you don't win, you can still order them from Harkness Roses at £6.99 (plus P&P), with £1.80 going directly to the RNIB. Tel: (01462) 420402.

Pack up a llama

If you read our article on page 17 and fancy trekking the Yorkshire Moors with llamas, here's your chance.

Bruce and Ruth Wright who run the cross-country outings are offering three readers the chance to go trekking for the day, worth £29 each.

For more details, contact



Bruce Wright at Wellington Lodge Llamas, tel: (01723) 871234.



It's showtime

Treat yourself and a friend to the theatre this Christmas, thanks to the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

DN has a pair of tickets, valid 1 Jan-4 April, up for grabs.

The theatre has been piloting audio described performances and is wheelchair accessible.

For performance listing, tel: 0161-833 9833.



Terence Rattigan's *The Deep Blue Sea*, on until 13 December

Books, books and more books

Following on from page 18, DN has the following to give away: Four copies of *A Genius in the Family* (£16.99); six of *On Equal Terms* (£16.99); six of *Beyond Bedlam* (£7.95); five of *My World*

(£10.95); five of *Hearing Dog* (£16.99); five of *Which? Wine Guide 1998* (£13.99); and five of *Which? Good Food Guide 1998* (£14.99). (See page 18 for more details.)

Hotel holiday

Relax after the Christmas stress with a weekend break.

The Ramada hotel (left) in Manchester city centre, is offering a lucky DN reader a free weekend break for two, worth £290, valid for Friday/Saturday or Saturday/Sunday, until April (subject to availability).

The hotel is registered with the Holiday Care Service and has a Category 1 rating (suitable for unaccompanied wheelchair user) with the English Tourist Board.

For detailed information, tel: 0161-835 2555.

To enter these special offers please send a postcard, marked roses, llama, Ramada, theatre or with the relevant book title, to DN, address on page 2. Closing date is 19 December. These offers are not open to DN staff or associates.

1998 VERSA Range

RENAULT Traffic

1.9 DIESEL
£12,895 on the road



A VERSA HAS NEVER BEEN SO AFFORDABLE

NISSAN Vanette

2.3 DIESEL
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VW 800 Special

1.9 TURBO DIESEL
£13,695 on the road



NEW Model



M1 TESTED AND CERTIFIED THE SAFEST SEATS AROUND

All Versa's are capable of carrying 2 wheelchairs. Suitable for families and organisations. All models available on 'MOTABILITY' lease.

Mercedes-Benz Vito

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£16,295 on the road
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Our flagship

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*This is a trademark of Motability registered charity number 299745



Certificate Number FS 33479
Monday - Friday
9.00am - 5.30pm

PLUS a range of used Versa vehicles are available. Prices start from £6495
Phone Howard Samuels or Philip Beecham for details of current stock.

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WIDNES CAR CENTRE

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VERSA SALES DEPARTMENT

Widnes Car Centre Limited,
Moor Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 7AL.

Tel: 0151 420 2000

Fax: 0151 495 1382

Disability Now

£1.60 December 1997

The award winning newspaper for everyone with an interest in disability

Labour's poor law

Legal aid for civil cases is to be scrapped, preventing many disabled people from suing for damages. See p.1

Chocks away! Leg amputee Jim Lunn, 76, who lives at Cammey's Court ExtraCare scheme in Stoke, tries out a motor glider during an activities day organised by the retirement home firm.



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CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Gifts, toys, holidays, books and recipes



MOTOR SHOW

Car firms open their doors wider



THE OTTO BOCK CLINIC

A CARING AND PERSONAL APPROACH

Here at the Otto Bock clinic we combine a personal and caring approach with the very latest technology. We aim to offer you the best solution to your prosthetic or orthotic problem.

Our well equipped clinic is staffed by qualified prosthetist/orthotists and technicians whose caring outlook and diverse experience mean that we are often able to approach problems from a fresh angle.

Whether your visit lasts an hour, a day or longer, we do everything we can to make your time with us as productive and pleasant as possible.

We aim to provide you with complete satisfaction. In addition to this, we offer a comprehensive warranty on all our products and various payment options.

The company believes that only through continuous training can our staff be kept fully aware and able to respond to the latest technological advances.

Otto Bock has 21 offices worldwide and is a world leader in prosthetics and orthotics.

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